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VOL. 43 NO. 3 MARCH 1939

CORADDI

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CORADDI

STUDENT PUBLICATION OF THE
WOMAN'S COLLEGE
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

MARCH, 1939
VOLUME 43 NUMBER 3

Jane Parker, Sophomore, is new to *Coraddi's* readers. Her article on railroads was written to give the railroad's side of the tax question. Jane's ambition is to be a lawyer.

Susan Barksdale, Senior art major, is interested in the supernatural. She has a pet ghost which she says she keeps in a closet. Her sketch is an account of a real experience.

Alice Sircom is a Junior. Her article on Robert Sherwood is her first contribution to the magazine this year.

Evelyn Brown, Junior art major, did the cover design and the lithograph on page 11. Her work has not appeared in *Coraddi* before.

Mrs. E. T. Harvey is a special student in the art department.

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All-American Honor Rating

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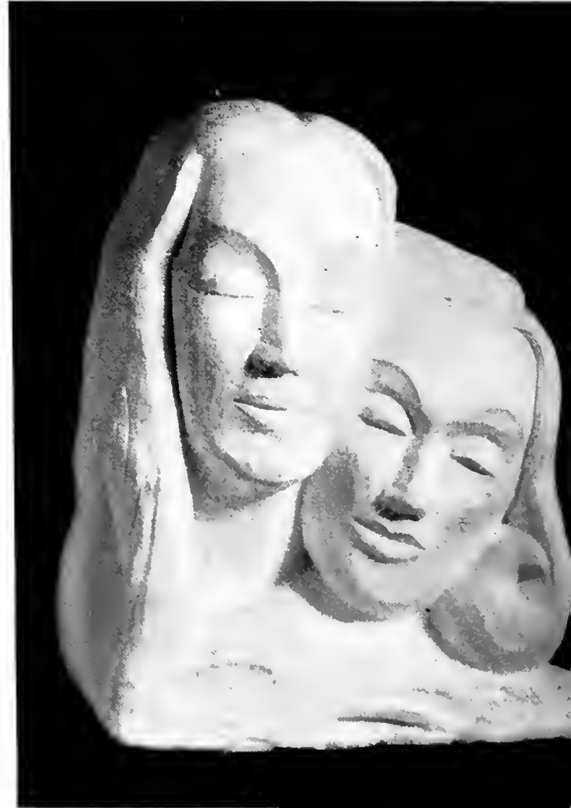


FRONTISPIECE
By Jane Herring
and Emeline Roberson

A House of Her Own

By Susannah Thomas

MRS. Atley stood beside the kitchen sink, peeling potatoes. She was a small, blonde woman with a muscular body under her lavender colored house dress. Her eyes were blue in a tan-colored face and her rather coarse, abundant hair was bleached almost white by the sun.

She worked hurriedly. Once she laid her knife down and walking into the back hall paused before a closed room. She opened the door slowly and with her head inclined towards the crack listened for sounds from her sleeping husband who was a night mechanic for the downtown garage. As she closed the door there came to her the sound of a heavy man turning over slowly on a mattress. Thinking that she would just have time to prepare her husband's supper by six o'clock she tiptoed back to the kitchen.

As she dipped her hand into the grey enamel pan to draw a potato from it, she heard a knock on the front screen door. Wiping her hands on her apron as she pulled it off, she threw her arms into a smock printed with orange nasturtiums which she took from a kitchen chair. A pair of garden scissors were in one pocket; she did not remove them.

She ran on her toes from the kitchen through the dining room and into the living room. In a glance she saw the sofa dragged out into the floor pulling up with it a corner of the rug. A flower catalogue lay open on the floor and beside it was a child's sandal. With her knees Mrs. Atley pushed the sofa back to the wall, then she kicked the shoe under the sofa, and went quickly into the hall. The front door was open. Two women were standing with their backs to her in the entrance outside the screen door.

The figures, seen through the screen, were indistinct but Mrs. Atley could tell that one of the women was heavy set, with ankles that bulged out over the sides of her shoes. The other woman was small. She had turned her face towards her companion and was speaking in a low voice:

"She grew up at Soo's Creek . . ."

"She never should have left it," her companion said.

She heard Mrs. Atley's step in the hall and turned quickly. "How do you do, Mrs. Atley? Mrs. Cummings and I were just saying what a beautiful view you have here."

She pointed to the lawn across the street where long shadows were cast from the oaks and low sweeping willows. Set far back from the street and surrounded by small trees and evergreen bushes was a white brick house. The wicker furniture on the two porches that stretched out on either side was bright with orange-striped cushions.

"Yes, the trees are lovely," said Mrs. Atley.

The heavy-set woman, Mrs. Vatch, moved over until she stood directly in front of Mrs. Cummings.

Mrs. Atley, standing in the hall, realized that she had not asked the women to sit down. Her hand gripped the half-open screen door. "Come in, won't you?" she said.

Mrs. Vatch made a step toward the door. "Thank you, Mrs. Atley."

Mrs. Atley quickly crossed the threshold, pushing her hand out before her to prevent Mrs. Vatch from entering the hall. "Let's sit out here. It is so hot inside," she said and walked over towards the hanging swing and the two split-bottom rockers.

Mrs. Cummings, a woman young in her forties, followed Mrs. Atley and sat down in one of the chairs. She wore a blue flowered lawn dress. Her white kid shoes were meticulously clean. "It has been so hot today," she said. 'We must be going to have a shower soon."

With her brown hand, Mrs. Atley brushed a naked doll from the swing seat which she was offering to Mrs. Vatch.

The doll bounced along the floor; the china head, already cracked, fell in pieces beside the swing. The glass eyes, loosened from their sockets, lay staring up at the women.

Mrs. Vatch sat down in the seat offered her. "Don't go to such bother," she said. "We can stay only a minute."

Mrs. Cummings looked at the heap of broken china. "What a pity!" she said.

Mrs. Atley sat down on the edge of her rocker. "The doll was old," she said.

She looked at the two women. Mrs. Vatch

was the wife of the president of the Home and Loan Bank in town. Mrs. Cummings was her close friend. Neither of the women had been to her house before. And now that they were sitting upon her porch, she was more afraid than flattered by their presence.

Mrs. Vatch leaned forward. The swing chains grated as she shifted her weight. "Mrs. Atley," she said, "We were wondering if you could let us have some of your dahlias."

Mrs. Atley's fingers relaxed along the side of her chair. "I was in the garden when you came . . ."

"Just anything you've got," said Mrs. Vatch.

"My dahlias are simply burnt up from no rain," Mrs. Atley said.

"The dahlias at Mrs. Sandford's luncheon yesterday were lovely," said Mrs. Cummings, turning toward her hostess. "They were yours, weren't they?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Atley, smiling. She rose from her chair and pulled the shears out of her smock pocket. "We can go see what I have," she said, snapping the blades together.

Following Mrs. Atley, the women carefully picked their way along the cement path running parallel to the lower side of the house.

As she hurried down the walk Mrs. Atley looked at her own front yard. The grass was worn thin. It grew only in the center of the yard, and up near the house where the children's feet had escaped it. On the walk a tricycle lay collapsed beside a spirea bush. The shrub was broken through the middle; and on the sidewalk nearby lay the third wheel of the wrecked toy.

They had reached the garden. The two visitors paused at the edge of the plowed land. The garden, located about twenty-five feet directly behind the back door steps, consisted, in the main, of straight rows of dahlias. The staked plants looked like butterbean vines that had been stripped half-way up of all their foliage. The blossom stems were tied firmly to the short poles by strips of cambric and little boy's suiting. A blue-green water hose twisted through the dahlia plants and over the furrows.

Mrs. Atley stepped across the rows of dahlia plants to where a pile of faded newspapers lay under a clod of dirt. She jerked a handful from the pile. "There is not much here," she said.

Mrs. Vatch was looking at the flowers, at the rubber tube, and out beyond to where the vegetable garden began. The green corn leaves were wilted and the thin, tan-colored corn silks hung limp from the young ears. The okra pods were large and seedy.

She turned to the woman in the flowered smock. "We'd like some white ones if you can spare them," she said.

Mrs. Cummings had left her friend and was stepping carefully over the dahlia hills. "They are for Rachel Lindsey's wedding," she said. "We are having a tea for her."

Mrs. Vatch looked at Mrs. Cummings. She spoke slowly to the woman cutting the flowers. "You know . . . Just a little something for out-of-town guests."

Mrs. Atley smiled blandly as she stooped over into the flowers. She cut the stalks indiscriminately. Crooked stems, bent under the weight of giant blossoms, small white ones, with crinkled tips like crushed tissue paper that had been clipped at the edges; flowers with pale yellow centers that had pigment traced out in fine veins to the petal ends. She put her hand into a bush, felt for a firm stem, cut it, and wiggled the stalk out from the mass of strong leaves. For each separate flower which she cut, she would walk back to the outspread newspapers, and lay it criss-cross over the others.

Mrs. Cummings picked up a cut flower from the heaped-up pile. She looked at the blossom closely, touching its petals with her finger tips, then turned it over to the back where the green sepals clung firmly to the bloom.

"How do you grow such flowers?" she asked.

Mrs. Atley straightened up, holding the flower which she had just cut level with her eye. "It's not much trouble," she said. "Just mostly time."

"Do you spray them?"

"Oh, no. I just have to water them and keep them up off the ground while the blooming is heavy. Of course, you have to dig them up before the frost can get to the roots."

Stout Mrs. Vatch moved over to where the roof of the back porch threw a square shaped shadow. She stopped to catch her breath, emitted a heavy sigh. "I know you must get a lot of exercise this way. I wish I had time to work out in a garden."

"There are so many calls on you nowadays," said Mrs. Cummings. "After the wedding I will have the children to pack up for camp."

"Fred is trying to make me go on the Bankers' Convention to Bermuda," said Mrs. Vatch. She looked down at the stooped figure grappling in the bushes. "Is it really true that you are leaving us, Mrs. Atley?"

Mrs. Atley straightened up on one knee and looked at Mrs. Vatch. "Leaving?" she said.

The two women faced each other. Mrs. Vatch lowered her eyes. "I thought you might be selling your house. I heard my husband mention it in connection with the young Rainey couple."

Mrs. Cummings dropped the flowers she had been holding. "They are having such a hard time finding a house. I told them if I were they I would have a country place."

Mrs. Atley rose and brushed the dirt from her smock. With her free hand she pushed the hair which had fallen over her eyes back over her forehead. "We own this house," she said.

There was a silence which neither of the women seemed to want to break. Then a step was heard on the porch. Mrs. Atley looked towards the back door. A small child with thin, blond hair and a pasty face stood in the doorway and called in a piercing voice: "Mamma, you better come on. Daddy's up!"

Mrs. Atley stooped and picked up the two opposing sides of the newspaper, and enclosed the paper and the flowers in her strong arms. She walked away from the garden toward the child. "Hush, Henry, Mamma has company."

Mrs. Vatch watched the child as he looked at his mother for a minute, then opened the screen door and slammed it behind him. "Children do say such funny things," she said.

The boy's mother walked briskly around the corner of the house, past the garage, and out to the street where Mrs. Vatch had parked her car. She waited beside the machine until the two women had caught up with her.

Mrs. Cummings opened the rear door of the car and took the flowers from Mrs. Atley's arms. She laid them gently on the grey plush seat. "Gorgeous flowers," she said.

Mrs. Vatch who had arrived last stopped and took a breath. "Mrs. Atley, I want to pay you."

"Oh no," Mrs. Atley waved her arm emphatically. "I would not think of it."

"But you must . . ."

Mrs. Atley turned her blue eyes on the stout woman. "I like to grow flowers for my friends," she said.

Mrs. Vatch opened the door of the front seat, and slipped in under the wheel. "You are a dear to do this, Mrs. Atley," she said. She looked back over her shoulder at the flowers. "Rachel will love these."

Mrs. Cummings had taken Mrs. Atley's hand. "This is lovely of you. You must let us do something for you sometime." She dropped the unresponsive hand, and got into the front seat with Mrs. Vatch.

"Goodbye and thank you ever so much," said Mrs. Vatch starting the engine.

"Yes, so very much, Mrs. Atley. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

The woman left standing by the curb watched the car until it was out of sight. Then she walked with big steps back to the porch, and opened the screen door with a jerk. She ran through the living room, and reached the kitchen, breathless.

A large man was standing in the doorway leading into the kitchen. His legs were straddled so that his heels touched the opposing facings of the door. His head came within three or four inches of touching the headboard. He wore striped blue overalls, and his eyes were bloodshot as if he had just a few minutes before got up.

He shifted his weight in the doorway, and turned his body so that he faced his wife. "Well," he called out and moved aside into the kitchen so that she could pass.

Without answering, Mrs. Atley went to the woodbox, selected three small pieces of wood and dropped them on the apron of the stove. She pulled some papers out of the box, and quickly threw the paper, bark, and small wood into the grate, then struck a match.

When the flame had spread through the kindling, and the fire was singing noisily in the stove pipe, she reached for the frying pan, put it on the stove, and took the coffee pot from a hook on the wall. She wished Henry would leave. She could fry ham and eggs, and sliced potatoes in ten minutes if he would only leave the room.

Mr. Atley cleared his throat. "Well," he repeated in a loud voice. "Have you seen a clock, Rita?"

Mrs. Atley did not answer. She put the ham in the pan. It sizzled and boiled up. While the meat fried she took the knife and sliced the potatoes without cutting the brown edges off.

Mr. Atley shifted his feet. "It is twenty minutes after six, Rita."

Mrs. Atley continued with her work. "I'm hearing you, Henry."

Mr. Atley came over and stood at the other end of the table. He lifted a piece of potato skin between his thumb and forefinger. "Yes, you said taking a night job would work out." He flipped the peel from his thumb and fingernail. "Looks like I got pretty damn well fooled."

Mrs. Atley put down the knife and picked up a spatula. She turned the ham over in the pan. "This afternoon something happened I didn't expect," she said.

"I know. Mrs. Vatch came here," said Mr. Atley.

Mrs. Atley laid down the spatula, and walked past her husband into the pantry. She took three eggs from the refrigerator and got the store bread from a tin box. Depositing the things over on the work table by the potatoes, she returned to the pantry and brought a plate and cup and silverware. These she put on the enamel table which sat in the center of the room.

Mr. Atley leaned against the wall with his hand pressing down on the shelf above the woodbox. He put his foot on the rung of the chair. "You'd pretty near kiss old Vatch's foot just to give his wife a bunch of flowers," he said. He saw a catalogue lying open on the chair seat and picked it up. He looked at the picture of a yellow dahlia on the front. "Just go hog-wild over these things," he said, throwing the book back to the chair. It slipped over the seat, and fell on the floor. He did not pick it up.

Mrs. Atley put the ham into a plate and poured over it the scrambled eggs. Then she added potatoes fried in the ham grease with pieces of burned meat stuck on the tops.

Mr. Atley watched his wife's preparations closely. As she moved over to the stove for the coffee, he sat down slowly, moving a portion of his body at a time. First his legs saddled the chair, then his body came down. Finally he brought his arms around out in front of him, and settled himself in the seat. "When are you going to feed your children?" he asked as he picked up a piece of white bread.

Mrs. Atley poured his coffee. Her mouth was compressed, and she moved her body as if it had no joints. "I can raise my children," she said.

He put three big spoonfuls of sugar into his coffee. "They are raising hell, here in the streets, under my window," he said, blowing on the coffee to cool it. "A fifty foot lot to play in. More like a chicken coop than a place to live in." He swallowed a drink of coffee. "Yes, the yard and the house, too," he said.

The little boy, Henry, was standing in the door opening on the porch. The front buttons of both his blouse and breeches had come off. He held his pants up with his hand. Flossie, his sister, stood outside the porch on the steps with her face pressed against the screen.

Mr. Atley watched Flossie as she approached him. "Flossie," he said as he drew the child to him," I bet you'd like to live in the country."

Flossie rubbed her fingers over her father's knee. "Where's that?" she said.

Mr. Atley laughed. "Don't you know?"

The child turned her face up towards her father's, shaking her head.

"Oh, we'd live on a farm, and have cows, and chickens, and dogs and puppies, and I'll teach you how to ride a pony if you promise not to fall off," he added, laughing and picking the little girl up in his arms. As he swung the child up from the floor her bare feet smeared dirt on his clean overalls. He pushed her from him. "Go wash your feet, child."

Flossie looked at him, and then ran out of the room, crying as she went. Henry who had been standing beside the kitchen door walked slowly over to his father's table just as his sister left the room.

Mr. Atley laid down his fork and addressed his son between chews. "You want to live on a big farm, don't you, Henry?"

The boy looked from his father to his mother. His father was big. Seated at the table with his legs planted solidly on the floor, he looked as if his body had been melted and poured into the striped mould of his newly starched overalls. His mother was putting some raw meat into a clean frying pan. Her deep blue eyes were looking intently upon her son, and her light brown hair was loosely put up. On the left side a lock fell straight down over her ear.

"Does Mamma want to?" Henry said.

Mr. Atley looked at his wife who was running her hand across the percolator top. "Your mother doesn't care," he said laughing and slapping his hand on his thigh. "She's used to the country."

Henry again turned towards his mother. Now she was lifting a piece of browned ham into a platter with the tip of her spatula. "Then I'd rather stay where I can have a horse and ride," he said.

A boy's shrill voice came in from the yard. "Henry, ain't you through your supper yet?"

Henry ran out of the kitchen.

Mr. Atley watched his son disappear. "There goes that boy again, out in the streets," he said.

Mrs. Atley laid the spatula down by the platter and removed the pan from the stove. She sat down opposite her husband, laying her hand heavily on the table. "Henry," she said, "You know how I feel about this moving to the country."

Mr. Atley drank a swallow of coffee. "We'd be a lot better off there. You could keep chickens and the niggers out there could make us a garden."

"But this house, Henry. We live right here with the best people."

"I'd rather live next to people who speak to me," Mr. Atley answered gruffly.

Mrs. Atley twisted the gold band on her ring finger. "We've had this house a long time," she said.

Mr. Atley was watching her face. "Well, if it would make you feel any better, I won't sell it." He rose from the table, pulling out of his top pocket a watch which was attached to a button by a plaited leather string. "Hang it, I'm already late. I can't ever get away from here on time to save my life." He slipped the watch back into his pocket and strode from the room.

Mrs. Atley rose and ran after him. "Henry," she called.

Mr. Atley had reached the dining room door. "Yes?" he said.

Mrs. Atley came near to him. "It's a promise?" she said. "You won't talk about moving anymore?"

He stopped abruptly. He was breathing in heavy, short jerks. The small red veins on his nose stood out. "No, I ain't saying any such thing. I mean it. I can't keep a job like this."

Mrs. Atley stared at him. "You're just talking now." Her fingers tightened in her palms. "It don't sound right to people," she said.

Mr. Atley's balled-up fist shot into his open palm like a baseball hurled into a left-handed mit. "If Vatch's bank could find me a buyer for this place, I'd leave here tomorrow," he said.

II.

The sun beat into the kitchen through the window panes, scattering checkers of sunshine across the linoleum. It caught the lights of the nickel fixtures of the sink and threw reflections into the clean corners of the porcelain sink. Mrs. Atley sat in a chair beside the east window, shelling butter beans. Directly in front of her was a kitchen chair, placed sideways, with the back to the window. She propped her feet on its lower rung, and occasionally she would lean forward to turn a page of the flower catalogue lying open in the empty seat.

Sometimes she looked down at the beans she was shelling, then she would glance across at the open book, and try to shell the next pod without looking. Frequently she heard a bean scutter over the linoleum to land under the stove or among the sink pipes but she did not get up to retrieve it. She was thinking about all that had happened yesterday: Mrs. Vatch's coming, the fuss with Henry, and what Mrs. Vatch had said about the Rainey boy's looking for a house. One sentence kept coming back to her. She could see her husband standing in the doorway after supper and could hear him saying, "If Vatch could find me a buyer, I'd sell tomorrow." She picked up a pod, and looking at it, quickly shelled out the beans and threw the empty pod on the floor.

The sun beat in through the window. She moved her chair a bit. She remembered that Henry had said when he came back into the kitchen about two o'clock that he had not been able to sleep it was so hot. She had suggested that he try the children's room. It was usually cooler there in the afternoon. He had gone back to the second room, and when she came in a little later she had seen him sitting in his underwear in a big chair beside the window. He had said he was more comfortable that way.

She heard a heavy step on the porch and straightened up, listening. The door of the tin mail box snapped shut. She picked up another green pod and wondered vaguely what the mailman had left.

Henry rushed into the kitchen, almost tumbling over himself in his hurry. He had on the same breeches as yesterday but the gap between the blouse and the pants had been shortened by the addition of a large safety pin.

"Mamma, you've got a letter," he called out before he could reach her. He handed it to her,

and stood, catching his breath, waiting to see what was in it.

She took the letter. Turning it over she read her name written across the front in black ink in a handwriting which was unfamiliar: "Mrs. Atley, Fremont Street." The envelope was small and made of linen paper. She tore open the seal, and reached in for the contents. An engraved card struck her calloused fingertips. She drew it out. It read:

Mrs. Frederick Vatch
requests the honor of your presence
at tea
Thursday, June twenty-ninth, nineteen hundred
and thirty-five
five fourteen Halifax Drive
Miss Rachel Lindsey five to six p. m.

Mrs. Atley read the card again then picked up the envelope and looked at the address. She glanced at the postmark and then at the Coca-Cola calendar hanging on the wall. Today was Thursday, the twenty-ninth of June. It was nearly three by the clock on the shelf.

Henry peeped over her shoulder. "Is it anything good?"

She got up out of her chair. Taking hold of the child's shoulder under his arm, she half picked him up off the floor. "I'm going to a tea," she said. "I'm going to Mrs. Vatch's."

Henry looked at her. He opened his eyes very wide. "You mean to a party, Mamma?"

She swung the child up from the floor. "Yes, to a real party!" She put him down, then stood calculating. She couldn't have the beans tonight. There would not be time for them to get done. She would hardly get back in time to broil the steak Henry had brought home with him when he came in from work. He had said he wanted steak and onions for his supper. She would have to let the chocolate pie go, too. There was a can of spaghetti on the shelf. That, heated, with sliced tomatoes and the steak, would have to do.

Henry watched his mother bundle the unshelled beans into the bag and take them to the pantry. "When are you going?" he asked.

"This afternoon," she called over her shoulder.

She tip-toed through the hall and over into her room. She was glad that her husband had decided to go to the children's room to sleep. She opened her middle drawer, and ran her hand through the pile of disheveled underwear to find her new stockings. She picked up, separately, single stockings that resembled her best ones, but they all had runs in them. Looking on the other side of the drawer she found one good stocking which was dirty. Opening up the top drawer she saw its mate, clean, and lying on top of her folded house dresses. Tossing the clean stocking to the bed and flinging the dirty one over her shoulder, she walked into the bathroom and returned in a minute with a wet stocking which she put on a coat hanger and hung in the window to dry.

She opened her closet, took out a navy blue crepe dress and held it out in front of her. It hung limp upon the hanger and the white frill at the neck drooped. She would have to iron the collar. Seeing the wrinkles on the front she decided she would try pressing the whole thing on the wrong side. She then took a blue felt hat from the shelf and blue shoes, that, having been worn steadily for best since last year, needed the heels rebuilt.

At a quarter of five she stood looking at herself in the mirror. She thought that the dress had been helped considerably by the pressing. The hot iron had made a slick spot on the plait. She turned slightly to see if it showed. She believed that with the other fullness in the skirt it would not be noticed. Seeing that her nose was still shining, she dipped her puff into the powder and put a dab on it. But her face being sunburned the shine continued to reflect through the flesh powder. She flicked a piece of dandruff from her sleeve and left the room.

She opened the door softly to the children's darkened room. She hoped her husband would be awake. She wanted him to see how nice she looked. Then too, she would need to ask him for the car. The chair in which she had left him about two o'clock was empty. She looked from the window over the bed. Mr. Atley slept, stretched out on the bed, lying on his stomach. He wore only his short figured trunks. His long legs reached down the sheet and touched the foot-board. Around his feet was twisted the second sheet. His face was red-seamed, and his hair about the temples was wet. His mouth had dropped open, and he was breathing through it.

Mrs. Atley stepped outside the door and closed it quietly. She was disappointed that her husband could not see her. She wondered what to do about the car. She was afraid to take it.

He might want it before she returned. Frequently when it was too hot to sleep or he was restless, he drove it out into the country before supper. He liked to ride out on the graveled roads to his father's old place to see the corn and cotton growing, and to talk to the tenants who were still there on the land back from the time when he was a child.

She called her son to give him a message for his father if he awoke before she returned, but Henry had gone out to play and she could not find him without calling so loudly that she might disturb the sleeping man. At five minutes of five she left the house. She noticed that the sky had clouded up and she thought it smelled like rain.

III.

As soon as Mrs. Atley opened the front door to her own house again at six twenty-five, she knew that something terrible had happened. The living room was dark and the pongee curtains, wet at the hems, flapped in and out over the window sill. A wind had blown up a thunder shower, and while the rain had ceased, the clouds through the windows hung ominously low. The room was too still she thought, and then wondered why she was so depressed.

Perhaps it was because she felt that she had been insulted at the tea. Just as she was leaving Mrs. Vatch's home, she had gone back to where Mrs. Vatch, dressed in ice blue chiffon, was standing in the receiving line. She wanted to tell her that she liked the arrangement of the white dahlias with the yellow centers in the low green bowl. Mrs. Vatch had waved her back with her fat, gloved hand. "Mrs. Adams will show you out the side entrance," she had said. Everybody in the line had looked at her as if they thought she did not know any better.

Flossie, not seeing her mother, came into the room. She lay down across the sofa, whimpering and munching a cracker at the same time. A crumb caught in her throat and she coughed.

Mrs. Atley looked at the child and without speaking to her went to the windows overlooking the upper yard. The garage doors were closed, but she could see through the big crack between the swinging doors the back wheels of the automobile.

She put her hand to her throat and turned quickly from the windows. She called her husband. Flossie heard her mother's voice, and ran to her crying louder. "I'm scared," she said and squeezed Mrs. Atley's knees and clung to her skirts as the woman, nervously pushing the child from her, walked into the dining room.

As Mrs. Atley entered the dining room her son came in from the kitchen. He had a piece of white bread that had been pulled off, uncut, from the loaf, in his mouth.

Seeing the child, she spoke to him: "Henry, where is your father?" She bent down to take hold of his shoulders. "Quick, tell me!" she said.

Henry took the bread out of his mouth, trying to talk before he swallowed. His words were indistinct.

Mrs. Atley shook the child. "For God's sake, speak to me, Henry! Where is your father?"

He lowered his eyes, and talked down towards the floor. "He's gone," he said. "I guess he went to work."

The woman screamed at the child, knowing that he was not telling the truth. "You're lying, Henry. The car is here."

Henry squirmed from her clutch. "He was mad 'cause you didn't come home," he said.

She gripped his shirt sleeve. "Go on," she said.

"A man came in while it was still raining."

"What did he look like?"

"He was young looking," the child said. "He laughed a lot."

Mrs. Atley released her grip on the child's arms. "What did he say?"

Henry wiggled his arms. "I don't know. Daddy told me to get out."

Mrs. Atley took her child's face between her hands. "Where is he now?" she said feebly.

"They left together. Daddy called to me as he was leaving to take care of Flossie until you came."

Flossie, hearing her name called, began to cry louder, holding against her body a cloth doll whose head had been broken off at the neck. Mrs. Atley got up from the floor, and took the girl in her arms. As she pressed the child to her, Flossie's bare feet left dusty prints on her blue silk dress.

The telephone rang. Mrs. Atley stood still, too stricken to move. Then she walked across the dining room to the back hall where the telephone was attached to the wall.

She thought that it must be her husband calling. Probably he was at his work and wanted to tell her he wasn't mad.

She took the receiver down from the hook. "Hello. . . Is that you, Henry? . . . Hello. . . "*Mrs. Rainey?* Yes, this is Mrs. Atley. . ." She tightened her hold on the receiver. "Sold the house? I don't understand. . . *This afternoon?* . . ." She leaned against the wall and held on to the telephone box for support. She put her hand to her head and pressed her temples with the blunt ends of her fingers then spoke, finally, in a flat, dead voice: "Yes, Mrs. Rainey, you may look at the house. . . Yes. . . tomorrow will be all right. . ."

The person on the other end of the line had hung up. Mrs. Atley wiped her eyes. She fumbled for the hook, found it, and placed the receiver on it. She turned her body away from the telephone, and faced the entrance to the dining room.

Henry laid his uneaten bread on the hall table. Flossie, staring at her mother with wide open eyes, ran over to her brother and stood close to him.

Mrs. Atley leaned against the hall door. Through the window opposite she could see peach branches blowing up against the screen to shatter water drops on the wire mesh. Looking out the window, and hearing the leaves scraping by the glass, she saw a young girl of twenty with eyes the color of larkspur—so a neighbor boy had once told her—leave the Soo Creek railroad station on an early morning train . . .

She smiled bitterly as she saw a woman exhilarated with happiness standing beside a tall mill foreman at the parson's house with the preacher's wife and daughter as marriage witnesses. The girl had held in her arms a big bouquet of cut flowers. The groom had told her proudly that he had got them from the florist's.

She saw a bride, back from a five day honeymoon to Atlanta, talk over small house plans with a contractor. She was determined to have a house of her own. By doing the laundry and all the house work she had promised her husband to save enough to meet the monthly Home and Loan back payments. She remembered the house's going up. That was before the neighborhood had grown into the "desirable" residential section of town. She had stood for hours watching the carpenters swing the joists over to the heavy foundation supports. She had seen the brick masons lay every brick in the living room chimney. . .

Once more she lived through the birth of her first child, a son, in the front bedroom across the hall. She recalled the loneliness of knowing no one in town, of her husband's being absent, and she uncertain where he was. She remembered hanging baby clothes on the line in December when it was bitterly cold. The first clothes had frozen to the line before the last garment had been hung out. . .

She saw her husband come in drunk to the house two days before her second baby was born. He had quit the mill, he had said. He did not even realize why his wife was in bed, and why there was a strange Negress in the kitchen. . .

She remembered paying the last of the mortgage through the house money she had saved. She remembered how the deed looked when Henry brought it home from the bank. . .

When the children were old enough to take care of themselves, she had begun to grow dahlias. She threw her whole self into seeing them grow and burst into bright masses of color. It had kept her mind off things she did not want to think about. She remembered sending her flowers to her neighbors and, at last, seeing her flowers ride off in rich women's cars to decorate the tea tables of the town's aristocracy.

Taking her hand from the door facing, she shuddered as she saw the woman of thirty-three, with flaxen hair turning yellow-grey at the temples, rush out of her house to Mrs. Vatch's party to betray her flowers, her children, and her house. . .

The sight of the two children huddled together, watching, recalled her to herself. Slowly she walked from the back hall, into the dining room, out into the kitchen, through the porch, and out into the back yard. Picking her feet up clumsily, she walked past the dahlia rows, past the corn blades, wet touching her face and hands until she stood beyond the vegetable garden in the tall, dripping grass.

It was dusty dark. The clouds had broken, but the sun's rays were hid by a bank of navy blue clouds. Headlights were burning on the cars that ran along the highway a hundred feet away.

A colored boy of about eleven years was passing, swinging a lard bucket in his hand. She called to him. "Come here, boy."

He looked up and saw the white woman standing in the tall grass with the corn waving behind her. He walked the few yards to her and stopped.

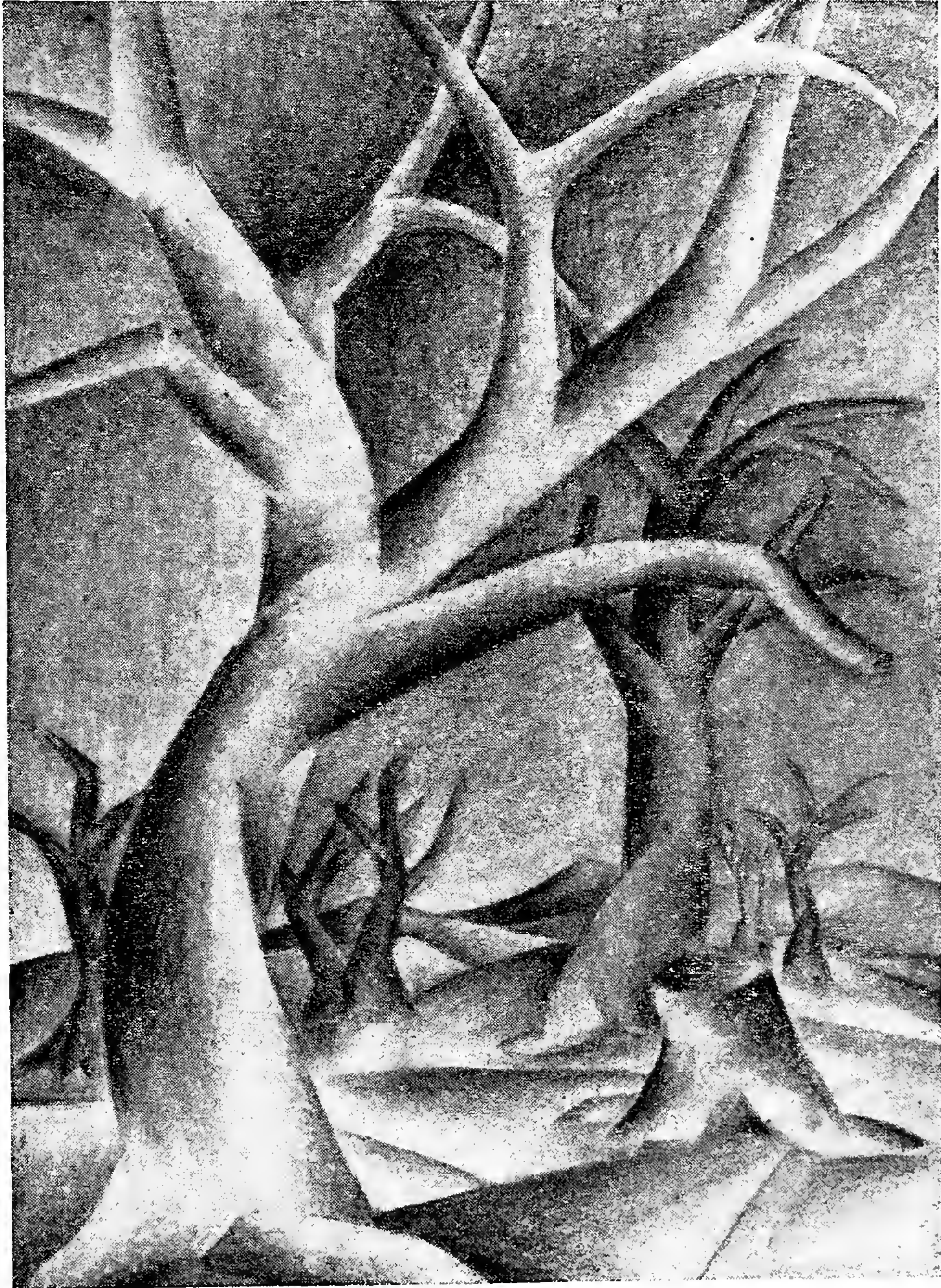
"Little boy," she said, "Can you work flowers?"

"Yes 'um," he said, and swung his bucket by his side.

"Then will you come here next week? I want you to help me dig up some flowers."

The boy looked at her again, as if to tell her that you didn't transplant flowers in blackberry time, but hearing the choke in her voice, he dug his toes into the grass and looked down at his fruit stained bucket. "Yes 'um," he said.

Mrs. Atley stood and watched the boy run along the path, watched him skid down the embankment and watched him jump into the highway beyond. Then she turned and walked through the wet grass back to the house.



LITHOGRAPH
by Evelyn Brown

The Problem of the Railroads

By Jane Parker

WHAT is the matter with railroads? Why can't they be operated profitably. Why are they always complaining about the tax burden? The North Carolina Railroad Association attempted to answer these questions in a recent letter to the members of the general assembly of North Carolina*.

Although the Southern Railway Company and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company are in possession of approximately two-thirds of the railroad business of this State, and notwithstanding the fact that the operating results of these two companies "are somewhat better than the average for all the railroads in the State," both these companies have been operating at a loss for several years. During the period 1931-1937, inclusive, the Southern Railroad lacked $17,093,737 of earning its mortgage interest. The Atlantic Coast Line for the same period lacked $11,329,321 of earning its mortgage interest. Although a part of the trouble of the railroads can be laid at the door of the "depression," an equal factor in their declining receipts is certainly the growth of competition given by bus and truck lines, competition which is increasing year by year. The railroads can never again operate under the conditions which existed before the day of the trucks and busses. The whole theory of the taxes upon railroads is based upon conditions which no longer exist. Although the railroads no longer have a monoply of transportation in North Carolina, they are taxed as though they had no competitors and could arbitrarily adjust their rates in accordance with the taxes paid. This is unfair. The railroads must fix their rates with due consideration given to the competition they must meet. No longer can they make the shipping and traveling public pay enough to prevent the railroads' operation at a loss.

Although but 18.55 percent of the Southern's tracks is in North Carolina, but 19.85 per cent of the Southern's fixed properties is in North Carolina, and but 22.15 per cent of the Southern's gross revenues intrastate and interstate is derived from operations in North Carolina, 30 per cent of the Southern's total taxes is paid in North Carolina. The bulk of these taxes fall into three classes: ad valorem taxes, income taxes, and franchise taxes.

Ad valorem taxes are taxes "imposed upon the value of the corporation property as a unit rather than according to the piecemeal assessments made by local assessors." In this State a special board values the whole of the railroad property and then apportions to each local unit the value of the property for taxation in each particular county, city or other such unit. The property thus taxed falls into two classes: (1) Real estate, which includes right of way and tracks, station houses, warehouses, etc.; and (2) personal property which includes rolling stock and other equipment. Until a few years ago a very large percent of all taxes in the state came from real estate, even the money used in support of the public roads. However, in 1929, the state took over the public roads and began to support them primarily, although not entirely, by a gasoline tax. In 1931, the state took over the larger part of the school burden and levied a sales tax to create the necessary revenue. Both of these acts somewhat ameliorated the situation with regard to the amount of ad valorem taxes paid by the railroads.

Although the railroads have for many years paid more in ad valorem taxes than any other class of business or enterprise, they feel that these taxes are fair in that railroad property is evaluated just as any other property in the State, and the railoads do not object to these taxes.

However, the State income taxes are another matter. During the years 1931-1937 the railroads, although operating at a loss, paid "net income" taxes to the State of North Carolina. There are two reasons for this paradoxical situation. Utilities under the Interstate Commerce Commission cannot deduct any "rent paid for property used in earning the income." Since "most of the railroads in North Carolina operate some leased lines and property," the reason that the railroads were paying net income taxes when they had no net income is easily understood. The other factor which made it appear that the rail-

**Quotations are from this letter.*

roads possessed net income to be taxed was the fact that utilities under the Interstate Commerce Commission cannot deduct anything for interest to be paid on a debt. No other tax payer in the State labors under these handicaps.

The worst encumbrance of the railroads in their competition with bus and trucking lines, however, is the franchise tax. The franchise tax of North Carolina, which is "a charge by the State for permission granted by the State to engage in intrastate railroad business," has "always been based on a stated percentage for ad valorem taxation." Although the net intrastate railroad business has decreased, at the same time, the franchise tax has been steadily increased. In 1937 the franchise tax exceeded the amount left to the Southern Railroad after all other expenses and taxes had been paid, by $8,144. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in the same year had a similar deficit of $85,107. These amounts had to be taken from the capital of the railroads. Out of the intrastate net, nothing was left for the stockholders.

In the evaluation of property upon which to base the franchise tax, naturally the road beds of the railroads are counted as real estate in the total value of property owned by the railroad. Busses and trucks, on the other hand, use the public highways, and, although bus and trucking companies have to pay franchise taxes on their property, the fact that such a large portion of the railroads' property, namely, their road beds, has no corresponding portion in the property of the bus and trucking companies, makes the franchise tax upon the railroads unfair. Also the railroads must bear the total expense of the upkeep of their tracks and roadbed. Although bus and trucking companies must buy licenses to operate on the public roads, the proportion of the expense of upkeep borne by the bus and trucking companies is much less than that of the railroads, who must bear the total upkeep of their roadbed and tracks. It is true that busses and trucks must pay gasoline tax on their fuel, but railroads have to pay indirect taxes on their fuel.

In all justice and fairness the State of North Carolina should readjust the income and franchise taxes in favor of the railroads, in order to make the tax burden in this State more uniformly distributed. The railroads are important to this State. Their well-being should be of interest to every North Carolinian. Not only do they pay a very large per cent of the taxes paid in this State, but the inestimable value of the railroads as business interests and as stimuli for other business interests in the State should be duly considered by all who are interested in the progress and prosperity of North Carolina.

Amo, Amas, Amat....

By Louette Glaser

The love I bear my love, and cherish so,
And guard so jealously, and, like a miser,
Take out each day to watch it daily grow,
Leaves me for him, and quitting, leaves me wiser.

Growth of Farm Tenancy in the South

By Elizabeth Pettigrew

TENANCY was not a new development which came about as a result of the freeing of the slaves. Written records of pre-war tenancy are hard to find, but historians generally believe it existed. Travellers' accounts provide one basis for the belief. The best foundation, however, is found in certain records kept by the state of South Carolina.

In 1842 this state employed Edmund Ruffin of Virginia to make an agricultural survey. Ruffin sent questionaires to local farm societies to obtain some of the needed information. The answer sent in by the Fishing Creek Agricultural Society of Chester District stated that the price of land had dropped, but that rents continued very high and were oppressive to the poor. The report also said that the average rent was $2 per acre or one-third or one-fourth of the crop.

At the meeting of the State Agricultural Society of Greenville in September, 1844, questionaires seeking information about agricultural problems including questions on share-tenancy were sent to the agricultural societies of Greenville, Pendleton, and Spartanburg districts. One question included was about the effect of tenant farming on the agriculture of the district. Suggestions for the changes to bring about greater agricultural prosperity for the districts were requested. There is no record of answers to the questionnaires. The president of the Society put the same questions to the Newberry district the next year and again no record of the answers can be found. However, the fact that tenancy was included shows that it existed and probably was not uncommon.

In the agricultural reports of 1856 and 1857 dealing with Chesterfield, Lancaster, Chester, York, Union, and Spartanburg counties in South Carolina, Oscar M. Lieber in discussing Governor Adam's wish to change the fence law brought out the fact that tenants were made to keep the fences in repair and often had to pay excessive rent for land having the necessary timber.

The economic basis for pre-war tenancy involves almost exactly the same problems the South faces today. The price of cotton had been extremely high for a number of years, especially from 1797 to 1807. In some cases the minimum return on one crop equaled the value of the land on which it was grown. The money the farmers made above living expenses was invested in more land and more slaves. Profits remained high until the 1820's. Then came a fall in prices that continued for many years. The British put a tax on cotton, and British money had a higher value than formerly. The tariff adopted by the United States reduced the amount of goods exported. The Gulf States had developed a new, finer type of cotton that gave stiff competition to the older Southern states.

The land had been ruthlessly exploited: the one-crop system had robbed it of its fertility, and over-cultivation and careless farming methods had resulted in erosion. The poorer, more ignorant farmers refused scientific aid and continued their old methods of cultivation. The larger planters, not over-careful in preserving their land, did learn more scientific methods of cultivation and usually took better care of their property although they were prone to take the attitude that they could always acquire new land.

The smaller farmers were engulfed by low prices, competition, and ignorance. They went into debt, mortgaged their land, and, in many cases, lost it.

The South was losing part of its population. Emigrants, of course, tried to avoid slave states. Many native-born or naturalized citizens left, moving westward or further South.

Political leaders of the South struggled with these problems, tried to work out solutions, and failed. Tenancy among the poorer whites was taking hold.

No accurate, written description of these pre-war tenants has come down to us. We cannot even estimate their number. Bits of information pieced together give a fairly complete picture of their lives: their homes were very small and they had only the barest necessities;

the people themselves were usually shiftless and unhealthy; malaria, hookworm, and pellegra were prevalent; their clothing was simple and coarse; the children often wore but a single garment, a long shirt-like affair similar to those worn by children of the slaves; some tenants paid rent for the land, others worked for a definite, agreed share of the crop; they were in debt most of the time. A system of credit-buying had been in use several years and was made legal by the lien laws of 1866.

Before 1820 the people had tended to push up the social and economic ladder. From 1820 to the war the people generally seemed to recede down the ladder. After the war negro tenancy grew rapidly and white tenancy became more widespread than formerly. The great plantations were sold for almost nothing. Some were bought by speculators, by Northern business men. Others were divided up and sold to small farmers.

The land now had to be worked by the owners with the help of whatever labor they could hire. The war had left the farmers so impoverished, however, that it was hard and often impossible for them to pay wages. Farming was the only thing that free negroes really knew how to do. Freedman's Bureau approved share-cropping contracts but were afraid of wage plans. Tenancy spread rapidly and absorbed a great part of these negroes. White people who had lost their property also drifted into tenancy.

Cotton prices were high again. Credit was scarce, the only source being the merchant. These merchants often charged exorbitant prices and the bills at the end of the year were amazingly high. (The farmer kept no record, leaving this altogether in the hands of the merchant.) The amount of credit a farmer got depended on how much land he would agree to plant in a money crop; therefore the farmers planted all their land in either cotton or tobacco, trying to get enough money to pay off the merchant. This kept the South tied down to one-crop farming, and as a result the land was exploited. Theories about diversified and subsistence farming sounded good, but the farmer was unable or, more often, unwilling to adopt them.

The old tax system put an almost unbearable burden on property owners. No tax was levied on such things as incomes, inheritance, or sales. Property tax was the only source of revenue.

Companies were formed which advertised loans at low rates. The farmers tried these, only to be caught by loops that in the end made the interest rates as high or higher than those of the merchants.

The bigger farmers contrived whenever possible to set up stores and to extend credit to their tenants and to neighboring smaller farmers. These merchants always managed to get on better financially than did the farmers, although they did suffer losses, especially in the years when crops were poor. Often negroes and "white trash" would charge large amounts and then slip away. Sometimes the tenant would be jailed for some offense during a busy season and the merchant would have to bail him out so the tenant could work the crop and make money to pay on his debts.

These merchant farmers became more and more interested in business and less concerned with farming; sometimes they dropped farming altogether. Often now if a tenant fails to pay up, for example, his seed loans for one year, the merchant waits until the busy season—usually late summer—of the next year. Then he has the tenant jailed for breaking his contract, planning on the owner's paying up the debt to get his tenant back in the fields.

Plantations became almost a thing of the past. Absentee ownership followed along the trail of mortgage foreclosures by banks and insurance companies. In the period from the close of the war to the end of the century, about 80 or 90 per cent of the Southern farmers were in debt. Until recently no accurate figures or statistics on tenant farmers were gathered; however it is estimated, that in 1880 about 36 per cent of the farms in the South were operated by tenants. Forty years later, in 1920, the percentage was 49.6. Today there are 1,831,000 tenant families, two-thirds of which are white. During the past twenty years negro tenants have tended to decrease in numbers while the white tenants have tended to increase. The negro migration northward has increased steadily.

During the early part of this century the demand for agricultural goods increased and the prices went up, there was a larger supply of gold in the country, and the farmers' condition was a little better. During the war prices boomed. Even the tenant cleared sometimes several hundred dollars. Then came a big slump. Prices

went down steadily; the croppers were lucky if they could pay off the merchant at the end of the year. Cotton and tobacco sold for around five and six cents a pound.

Since the first election of President Franklin Roosevelt government aids to farmers have been started. So far these efforts have met a great deal of opposition, bitterness. Crop control, marketing quotas, and wage minimums have not yet been well-adjusted and the farmers are not accustomed to them. Since the adoption of crop-control, land owners have not needed as many tenants as formerly. These people cannot find jobs in the industries because of the over supply of labor.

Land owners generally prefer negro tenants to white ones. The negroes are more satisfied with their work and are usually better farmers. White tenants are more often sullen, shiftless. They know very little and are not interested in learning. The general dislike that negroes have for them is reminiscent of the old slaves' hatred of "po' buckra'" or "po' white trash." Some white tenants are of course, more intelligent and capable and occupy positions more like those of overseers. Their children often obtain sufficient schooling to enter some profession.

There are several classes of tenants. One group rents land and pays a fixed rent or gives the landlord a share in the crop equal to the amount of rent. Another group, share tenants, furnishes everything but the land and pays the landlord a fixed percentage of the crop, which is usually about one-third. Another group, the share-croppers, furnishes only its own labor and this group, of course, has to pay an even larger share of its crop.

This last group usually gets from the owner an allowance each month on the money due in the fall. These allowances vary from about $5 a month to about $25. Often the tenants spend this in about the first two weeks of the month and then ask for extra money. This means that by the time the crop is sold the tenant farmer has already spent most of his share. The landlord and the merchant are the only bookkeepers of the business transactions. If either is dishonest the farmer is helpless, in fact, almost a slave economically.

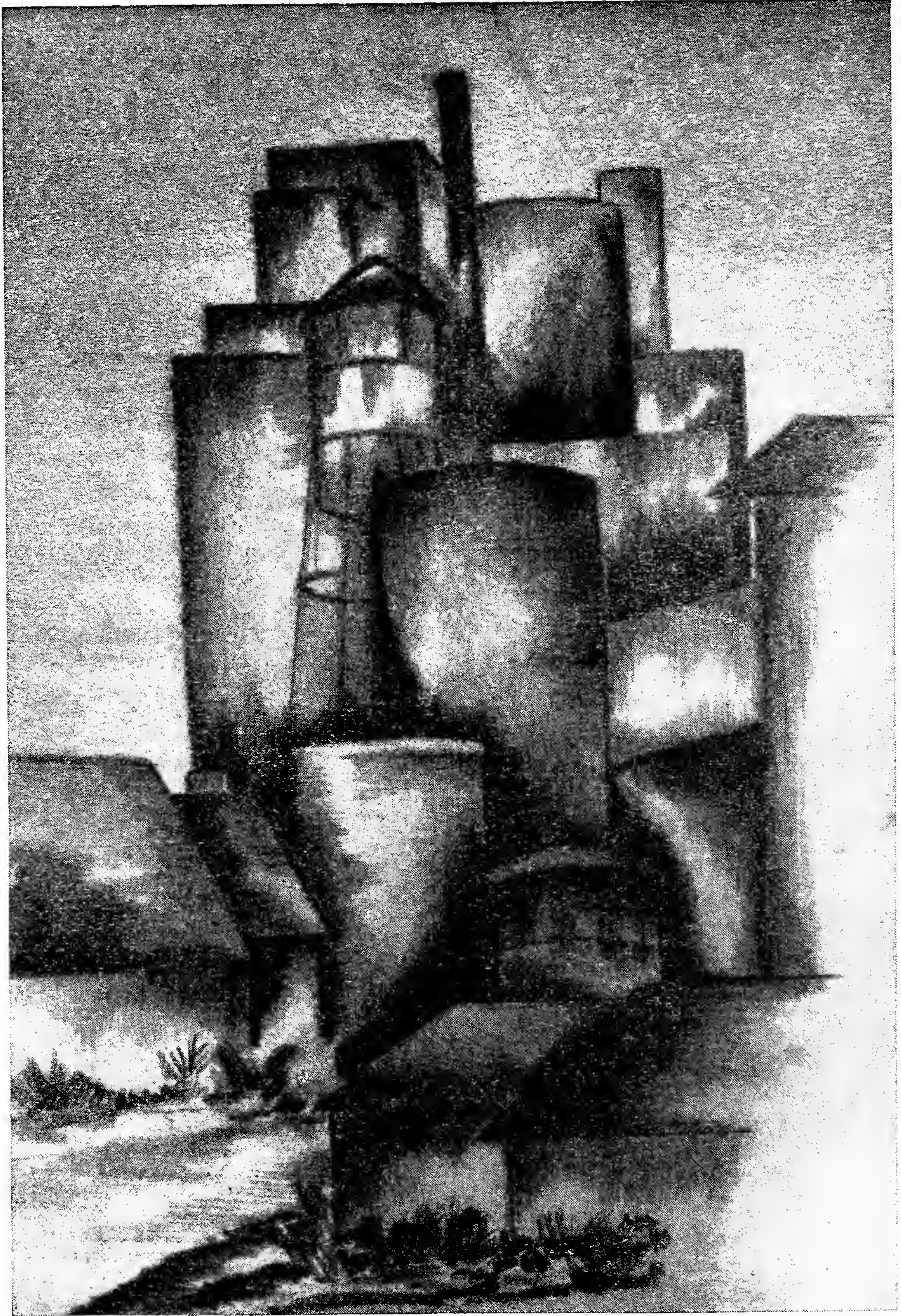
Today the life of the tenant farmers is no better than it was at the end of the last century. Not all of them live as Bourke-White's book *You Have Seen Their Faces* and the popular play "Tobacco Road" might lead one to believe, but their barren existence makes a picture that most Southerners would rather overlook: their houses are often unscreened, and usually have three rooms regardless of the size of the families living in them. The water almost invariably comes from yard wells, and is not always pure. About one-fifth of the farm houses in the South have no kind of toilet at all; in many places where privies are common and in others where inside flush toilets can be listed among the luxuries, the sewage disposal is so inadequate that typhoid fever, hookworm, and anemia are prevalent. The average tenant house in the South is worth about $350 according to recent estimates, and 4,000,000 families need to be rehoused. The last figure includes one-half the families in the South.

The popular theories of progress have not included these people who live today as their fathers and grandfathers did before them, in economic and cultural poverty. Their economic problems have at last come to the attention of the professional reformers whose efforts have been ineffective as usual. Thus far their cultural poverty has been under consideration only insofar as it effects their economic welfare. This may be due to the new scientific religion or it may be a sign of our attitude—that is, looking on these people as being less human than ourselves.

Incubus

By Virginia Wood

Time of extreme unction unperformed;
By the laughter of no gods or shepherds warmed:
The mind in nervous quest of noble prey,
(Such names as Shakespeare, Milton, Yeats)
Has lost the scent and tires beneath the gates
To nose the white flicker of a rabbit's tail.
From the unblinking scrutiny of this century's
Metal eyelids, what will absolve us:
The leisured pulse of a *Te Deum*,
Or pistons' hypodermic plunge?
—Where is that scanner of brimmed horizons,
That wax-wing, melted with the drop of cen-
turies
Into a silver calculation, hurried
Six hundred years to serve our sons?



LITHOGRAPH
by Mary Cochrane

The Strange Case of Tom Mooney

By Bettie Harward

THE wave of enthusiasm for "preparedness" which was passing over the country in 1916 reached San Francisco in July and on July 22 that city held a "Preparedness Parade." In the local enthusiasm there was more than a grain of national politics. A presidential campaign was opening, and the Republicans hoped to check the appeal of the Wilsonian Democrats, with their "He kept us out of war" slogan, by a lavish display of super-patriotism and military spirit. Accordingly every organization which could be appealed to on the grounds of patriotism was enlisted for the parade; college boys and young business men, the National Guard, the Civil and Spanish war veterans. Heads of great commercial and industrial establishments issued requests to their employees to march. Only the strongly unionized plants were not represented. Union leaders were avowedly contemptuous of preparedness demonstrations.

At one o'clock on July 22 the marchers were assembled at the Embarcadero and the little streets leading into lower Market Street. The parade started late. At six minutes past two, the head of the column, with the governor and the mayor prominently in display, was passing up Market Street. Suddenly, in front of a saloon at the corner of Steuart and Market, there was a terrific explosion which sent six spectators hurling to eternity, mortally wounded four more, and seriously hurt forty others. The parade detoured and the marchers went on.

This ghastly incident caught San Francisco in a peculiarly unbalanced mood. Labor struggles, beginning with the longshoremen's strike in June, had culminated in the public declaration by the Chamber of Commerce of its intention to make San Francisco an open-shop town. Immediately the Chamber organized a "Law and Order Committee" to repress violence with which labor unions were charged and to raise a fund which ultimately grew into a million dollars. The unions looked upon this parade as an open-shop demonstration and it was later disclosed that that was what it was intended for.

The United Railways were the head and front of this movement. Besides contributing largely to the fund, they paid the best lawyers in San Francisco to defend strike-breakers and strike-breaking detectives when, in the constant round of labor difficulties, union men happened to get killed. Six years before, the United Railways had been under fire and its highest officials accused of distributing huge graft funds to San Francisco's public officials for franchise favors. But in 1914 the United Railways' support and money elected Charles M. Fickert, a former Stanford football star, to the office of county attorney. His first official act had been to dismiss the graft prosecutions against the United Railways. Since then he had similarly kowtowed to the interests which elected him.

Now in the bitter labor-capital conflict which dominated San Francisco in 1916, one Tom Mooney was a personage. He had done his share of organizing and strike-breaking with the practical labor politician's due attention to publicity for his own activities. He had been abroad and mingled with radical European labor and in the summer of 1916 was engaged in a campaign to organize the employees of the San Francisco street car system, a branch of the United Railways. Mooney was not particularly popular in local labor circles and though active, was a free lance organizer. His campaign for the carmen's union was independent.

At the very outset of the labor-capital difficulties, the United Railways had engaged a Martin Swanson to help them keep union labor out of their corporation. And, as early as 1913, he had attempted to implicate Tom Mooney in a dynamiting plot in connection with an electrical workers strike. He had offered Warren Billings a job and share in the $5,000 reward for the hunted dynamiter if he would implicate Mooney. Billings refused. A similar offer was made to Isreal Weinberg, jitney driver and minor union official. When Weinberg refused, Swanson left him with the threat: "I'll get you yet."

This was Swanson's last contact with the Mooney circle until the Preparedness Day tragedy; but seven hours after the explosion, District Attorney Fickert, the United Railways' political beneficiary, summoned Swanson to his office, borrowed him from his corporation employers and placed him in charge of the investigation.

Five days later Tom Mooney, Warren Billings, Edward Nolan, Mrs. Nolan, Mrs. Mooney and Weinberg—all active workers for labor union—were arrested and charged with the Preparedness Day murders.

Testimoney against them was furnished by John McDonald and F. C. Oxman, (the honest cattle buyer from Oregon) who said they had seen Mooney at or near the corner of Steuart and Market streets, where the explosion occurred, at the time of the explosion. Even at the time of the trial their testimony was hopelessly contradictory. Judge Langdon, of the State Supreme Court, has said that, if one told the truth, the other must have lied. Subsequent developments indicated that they both lied. It was established that on the day of July 22, on his way from Portland, Oregon, Oxman had stopped off with friends in the town of Woodlands, a hundred miles from San Francisco, and had not left until 2:15. Also letters were disclosed to a friend of his, Ed Rigall, asking Rigall to come from Illinois and swear that he was in San Francisco with Oxman on the 22. Oxman was brought to trial; but with Fickert's assistants prosecuting the case and a judge, Samuel Shortsbridge, who believed in Mooney's guilt, he was acquitted. McDonald has repudiated his testimony nine times, but the Supreme Court insisted on believing that he was telling the truth in 1916, but lied later.

The other witnesses were Mrs. Nellie Edeau and her daughter, Sadie, who claimed to have seen Mooney at the corner of Steuart and Market when the explosion occurred. Later it developed that they were several blocks away at the time they said they saw Mooney. When asked how they could be in two places at the same time, Mrs. Edeau replied that her physical body had been in one place and her "astral" body in the other. Estelle Smith, ex-prostitute who worked in a dentist's office, also testified to having seen Mooney at the explosion, and later declared that she had been threatened with jail unless she told her story. A Mrs. Alice Kidwell, who testified in grand jury proceedings, was found to have been induced to tell her story in return for her husband's release from prison. The belated parole brought about her disclosure.

Besides all this, photographs of the parade from a roof of the Eilers Building, more than a mile from the scene of the explosion, show a portion of the edge of the roof with Mr. and Mrs. Mooney leaning over the parapet. A street clock taken in the different exposures points to 1:58, 2:00 and 2:04. The explosion occurred at 2:06, and even a balloon could not have got Mooney there in such a short time.

As these and further revelations came about during the summer of 1917, organized labor and liberal sentiment became convinced that Mooney had been framed. Judge Griffin, who had tried the case and sentenced Mooney to be hanged, was insisting on reopening the case in light of the new perjurous evidence. He said later that he must "have been slightly crazed by the hysteria of the time to have accepted for a moment the preposterous contention of the prosecution." President Wilson was moved by labor demonstrations before the American embassies abroad to take a hand in the affair. He appointed a commission which investigated the case and reported that Mooney had not had a fair trial and that the arrest had been engineered by Martin Swanson. The President asked Governor Stephens to reopen the case on one of the remaining indictments against him, but the Governor did nothing.

Meanwhile, a report by J. B. Densmore, also authorized by the President, a representative of the Federal Department of Labor, ripped the prosecution of its last garment of defense. Mr. Densmore installed a dictaphone in the private offices of Charles M. Fickert, still district attorney, which disclosed his activities in full. It seems that Fickert served his friends in return for votes and campaign contributions by granting even "the meanest services." Densmore's disclosure is an amazing sidelight on the practice of our criminal law. Fickert was grooming himself for governor and went just a little too far. At present he is a broken man, long since deserted by his patrons.

In November, 1918, Governor Stephens received an official copy of the Densmore report from President Wilson, and commuted Mooney's sentence to life imprisonment. California law and order groups grumbled that the "orderly processes of California" were being interfered with by the President. But, Mooney's neck was saved and the long fight to secure his and his young associates' release from life imprisonment begun.

By this time, of all the persons connected prominently with the trials of Mooney and Billings, only District Attorney Fickert and Assist-

ant District Attorney Cunha are left who have not publicly declared their belief that Mooney and Billings were unfairly convicted. A belief in Mooney's innocence had been expressed by Judge Griffin, who presided over the case; nine of the ten Mooney jurors then alive, and J. P. Breman, Assistant District Attorney who prosecuted Billings and others prominently connected with the case. It may seem incredible to the disinterested reader that in the face of these disclosures and confessions, this complete breakdown of the web of perjury and intrigue which surrounded the trials, that it should require any moral courage on the part of a state executive to right these wrongs—especially since he would have backing him the opinions of disinterested investigators and protests of internationally famous men and women. But the Mooney-Billings affair had become political dynamite—and no political careerist willingly handles high explosives. The industrially influential citizens of the state have repeatedly pointed to Mooney as a lesson to labor. They wanted to keep him where he was. So vociferous have been the opinions of these citizens that six governors turned a deaf ear to Mooney's pardon.

The Supreme Court of California repeatedly refused to raise a finger to help find the just solution of the Mooney case on the ground that it could not consider evidence not in the record. The court reasoned that Mooney's only recourse, if unjustly convicted, was to executive clemency.

The first governor to refuse Mooney a pardon was Governor Stephens; then came F. W. Richardson, the candidate of the "union-smashing" groups, who backed up Fickert in prosecution policies and felt that guilty or not, Mooney should stay in prison because he was a "radical agitator." From 1923 to 1927 he declined to consider Mooney's pardon application. And privately he said that practically all trial judges want to get their victims off soon after they have convicted them and, therefore, the stand of Judge Griffin was worthless.

In 1926 Clement C. Jory ran against Richardson for governor on the grounds that he would give the Mooney pardon application full consideration. But the industrial forces clamped down on him with the threat of political oblivion if he pardoned Tom Mooney, so he put off the consideration as long as possible, and then passed the buck to the Supreme Court again and finally accepted the court's biased verdict with a narrowness that amazed even newspaper men.

The next governor to refuse a pardon was Governor Rolph, who praised the San Jose lynchers. In January, 1935, the United States Supreme Court all but promised to hear Mooney's case if he would fulfill the final technicalities of resorting to all legal procedures in California. Mooney's attorney did so—but the court slammed its door in his face.

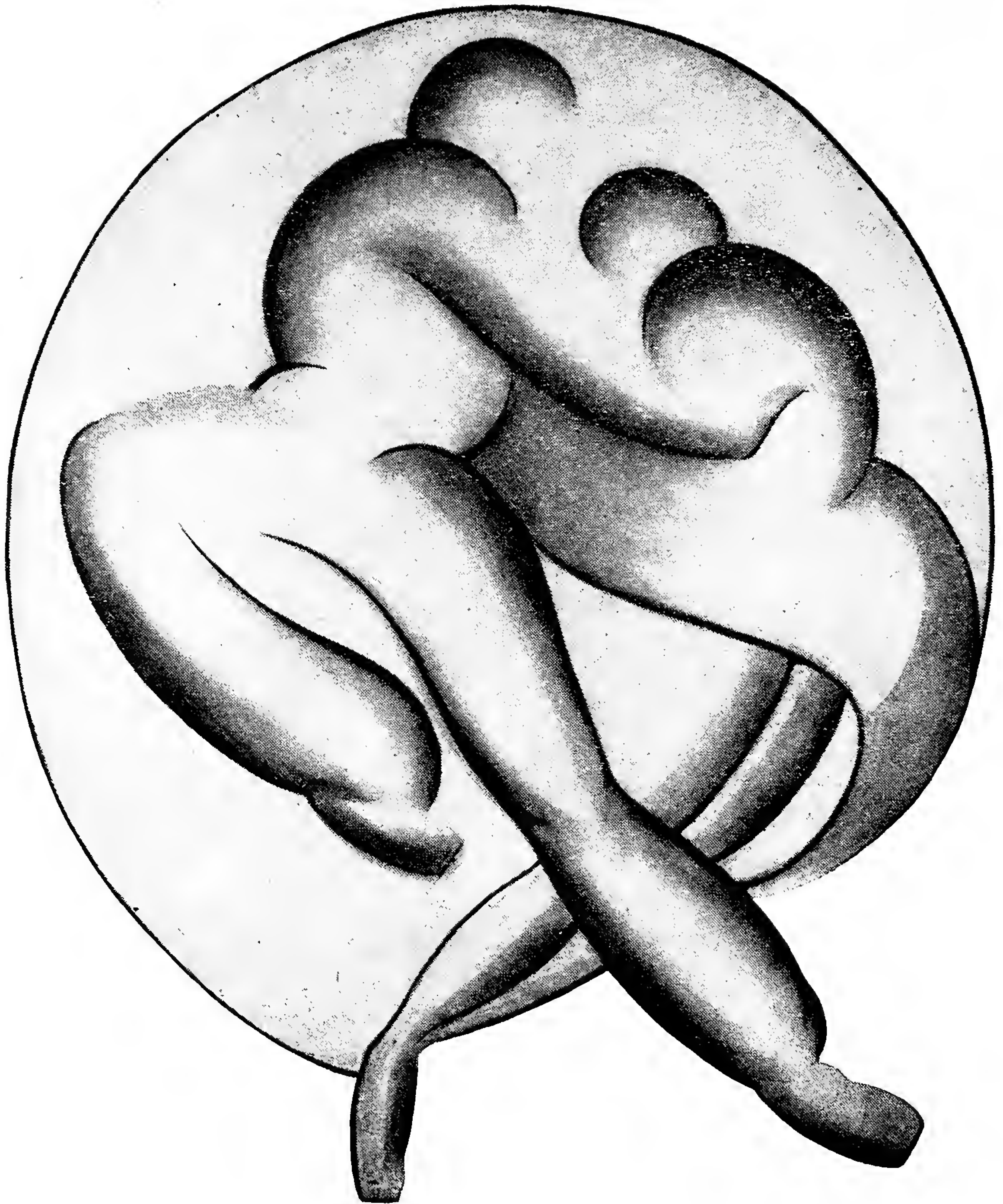
Then during Merriman's administration a resolution was introduced into the United States Congress calling upon the governor to grant an immediate pardon to Mooney after the Supreme Court of California had refused to grant Mooney a writ of habeas corpus. Out of this resolution came a court hearing for Mooney, which did no more than rehash all the new-found evidence. From this hearing came another plea that the Supreme Court review the case, but in October, 1938, the court again refused.

Meanwhile there was a gubernatorial race going on in California. The incumbent, Merriman, was running against Culbert Olson, whose main platform plank was a pardon for Tom Mooney. He won in the Novmber election and immediately set Mooney's pardon date for the first of January, 1939, twenty-two years after Mooney began his sentence.

At last California had elected a governor not terrorized by the state Tories who knew Mooney was innocent, but wanted to keep him in jail anyhow. In January, Olsen released his pardon message and set Tom Mooney unconditionally free. The message is a review of the American Bill of Rights with a reminder to Mooney which is really intended more for the public than for him—that the dictators of Europe would have shot him long ago. So the American people can be grateful, Governor Olsen's message concludes, that it has a system temperate and sane enough to permit a pardon after two decades of imprisonment.

Mooney is back in the world now—after twenty-two years of exile. He is no longer the prominent, news-worthy man — symbol of labor's cause—that he was in prison. He is a very middleaged man who has few prospects and a future only with labor.

Anti-climactical—this? That a man who was the prime example of political imprisonment should finally be so prosaic as to leave the wife who spent the best years of her life working for his freedom.



CHARCOAL
by Frances Templeton

Once in the Late Summer

By Susan Barksdale

The fire had burned high and died again to coals before my Aunt Sarah answered me. Then she said only:

"Noises, Lucy, ghosts? Nonsense. I've lived here over—well I'm getting along and I've never heard of such a thing. Whatever would be making noises besides a loose pig or old Bess come up through the weakening in the west pasture fence. . ."

I remember I looked at her and wondered that she was so long a time thinking of as simple a solution as old Bess. Bess was the fresh cow they'd brought up from the lower farm a week before, and more than once during my short stay she had broken into the upper yard and clattered about on the flagged court. Certainly her galloping made a noise but I didn't associate it with that I'd heard the night before. I don't know why I mentioned the incident to Sarah—blind chance, I guess, and a passion for the supernatural; or else because I had a growing belief that something of another world participated in our every activity. Even at that moment, as we sat by the late summer fire, I felt that Sarah and I were not alone.

I looked past her down the long hall-room, to the far end, where the stair swept up to the longer hall above. It was a strange house, big and rambling and pleasant like the fields about it in the sun; but let the sun set . . . Lord, sometimes, it was as if a gentle knife had sliced away the rest of the world. Now there was only the sound of our talking and occasionally that of the night bugs flicking the screens. I sighed and turned again to Sarah.

"You know," I said, "I figured it was the dogs. (She had two setters that slept on the porch.) "Sometimes they run against the chairs.

"Like I told you, it was about quarter after two; I'd just heard the clock down the hall strike a while before. It had a far away sound and not a quarter of an hour later there was that mad scramble on the stairs. That's when I decided it was only the dogs. It must have been one of the animals—silly of me to think anything, but this house—in the middle of the night."

Sarah didn't look at me. She sat still. Her fingers drummed the leather chair arm and she stared at the low red coals. I tried another tack.

I said, "Sarah, I think when generations of men spell out their lives under a single roof on a single sod something of the thought of them, something of the mind (by that I mean what I believe of soul) must seep into the walls that surrounded them. Seep in and stay. Stay but grow restless to be at work again. And, when a people has been as lusty, as at odds as has our own surely the mere act of dying . . ."

She shrugged and all her old religious anchorage rose up and surrounded her and staved off such impossibilities of thought. She mused aloud at present day education. . .

"It might have been the dogs or even rats," she said softly and there was a defeated sort of finality in her voice. I didn't mention the incident again. Soon after eleven the two of us went off to bed, Sarah to her room on the first floor, I, to mine opening just off the stairwell on the second floor.

I had the whole of the upper half of the house to myself—nine rooms along a narrow hall.

The door of the room yawned black at the head of the stairs, and I hesitated a moment before climbing to it . . .

I pawed about hastily in the room for the light switch, punched it, and stepped in under the weary warmth of the ceiling light. I crossed to the bed and sat on it, then dropped my shoes, one after the other, to the rug. One of them bounced a foot or so toward the open door to the adjoining room and sighed dully onto the floor boards. The shoe laces spilled over the side. Their ends ticked on the floor, one—two. A late jar-fly broke through the screen and batted about the ceiling, swung heavily and tangled itself in the left curtain. I turned on the bed lamp and cut the other out. After stretching deep to the sheet corners, I began a novel.

The thing got sentimentally interesting . . . something about a desert sheik and a lovely Englishwoman. I must have been reading hours

when far down the empty hall a clock sounding two reverberated and dulled slowly into silence. I looked at my watch and turned it up a minute, then went on with the last chapters of the book.

It was probably fifteen minutes later that I heard the noise in the lower hall. I shut the book carefully and placed it on the yellow counterpane, then sat up stiffly and looked straight down the deep stair where the light from my lamp fell in a long, pale beam. I watched closely, nervelessly, as the noise reached the top. It came as a child, in flight, climbing on all fours dragging its shod feet heavily, breathlessly. The scrambling reached the upper hall, turned and stopped outside my lighted door, surprised. There was no further sound, yet I knew something waited in the silence there. I had seen nothing during the whole of it . . . only the dim light on the stair and the sound of the ascending noise.

I waited, still, and there was a still anxious waiting in the dark hall. My neck grew damp cold and about me small molecular singings swam into eternities beyond the room. Swam out and back with a constant: "waiting, waiting, waiting."

I sat, terror-cool, waiting, and the silence gaped and waited and never moved. A loud silence crying and bursting with tremendous waiting, waited but never moved.

I cried inside myself, tore the sheet close with one hand and snapped off the light with the other. The faint click was thunder in the deep waiting, but nothing changed. Under the heavy covers I held tight to the sheeted mattress. I whispered madly, continuously one prayer, and whispering, knew it mattered little.

I must have dozed then because I remember starting awake, the sweat beading across my back. The cover brushed my chin and caught. For a space all was silent and I wondered stupidly to myself. Then I knew. There was waiting all in the room. Poised, thin-thread-held waiting. It was beading and singing but ever so still and silent. It brushed the chair by the door. It brushed the rug's fringe. My shoe strings ticked on the floor and lay still as if passed. The molecular singing went churning and churning, gathering, like butter, the waitings. Massing them, marshalling them, moving them close . . . all the waitings close, close at the yellow counterpane, closer.

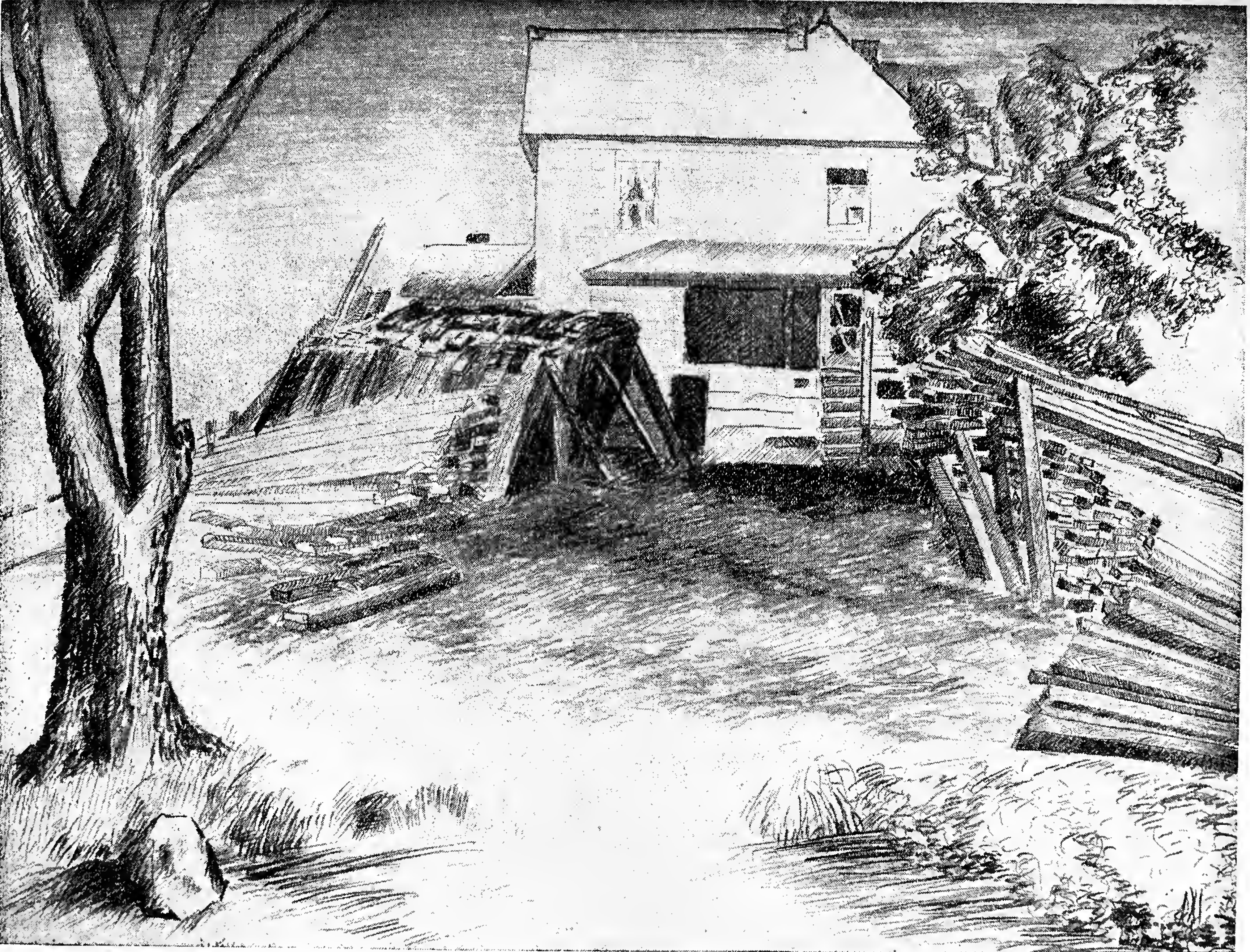
Carefully I peered into the dark beyond the bed . . . nothing. Nothing to see and yet . . . The room was filled with an almost vocal madness. There was a pulsing, pushing power to it.

"You don't belong," I whispered, "You've got to leave. Go back, away forever."

There was no answer, but the room was filled with "no" . . . the room and the stairs and the room beyond; then only the room beyond. There came a slow, dragging sound as of board on board and then a faint click. There was nothing more—I wondered. There was as always in the house a great sense of other presence—of free thought seeking thought held—of the supernatural seeking the natural. There was, however, no longer any sense of active presence.

I turned now conscious of change, of release. The grey mist of early morning lighted the room. The hall was half light beyond my door. My shoes lay on the rug. One had a soiled sock across it. The other was turned on the side, the string ends on the floorboards. It was close to the door of the adjoining room.

I jerked short the quiet inspection. A faint unrest attacked me and I wondered at it. I glanced past the shoe to the door. It was closed. There was no terror, no sense of foreboding, only the knowledge of recent change. All else was quiet . . . was as it should be.



Pencil Sketch
by Mrs. E. T. Harvey

Robert E. Sherwood: Wit and Philosopher

By Alice Sircom

IT ALL happened the winter of 1938 when three men walked into a bar in New York City to recuperate from a dull committee meeting. Two were heavily built, and their eyes snapped behind their glasses, and the other was angular and so tall he had to stoop to enter the dismal room. The Dramatists' Guild meeting had got nowhere, and Maxwell Anderson, Elmer Rice, and Robert Sherwood felt the need of a bracer. Inevitably, the talk turned to the theatre with its problems of producers, directors, and backers. Somehow—no one seems to know exactly where the idea started—they hit upon the plan of writing and producing their own plays as a producing company. In the next few weeks, after many subsequent meetings in more auspicious places, the Playwrights' Producing Company was organized. Anderson, Rice, and Sherwood asked S. N. Behrman (of *Second Man*) and Sidney Howard (of *They Knew What They Wanted* and *The Silvercord*) to be part of the company. In March the big five scattered to write, and last August Anderson was ready with his first musical, and Sherwood had completed one of his best plays to date, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois.*

Robert Emmet Sherwood has belonged with the big five among American dramatists ever since he showed promise with *The Road to Rome* and then fulfilled the critics' expectations with *Reunion in Vienna,* and *Idiot's Delight.* The five dramatists, who have reached the heights of their profession, are all quite different in temperament and writing. Elmer Rice, the author of *Street Scene,* and Maxwell Anderson, the poet author of *Winterset,* are the moral champions, and Behrman and Howard are the craftsmen of brittle comedy. Robert Emmett Sherwood is the middleman. Sherwood writes comedy and pathos, wit and drama; he backs frailty with abundant humor, and relieves philosophy with brilliant wit. When the critics criticize his lighter works as trivial, they always admit that it is the triviality of an intellectual man. The impulse of the moment undoubtedly drew the five together in the first place, and Elmer Rice says that common interest and sympathy are their strongest bond with respect and friendship, but each member must have a particular motive of his own for belonging to the group. They all admit that financial returns are one of the main motives for the organization, but they are far less definite about the idealistic motives, if any. Elmer Rice mentions craftsmanship and love of the theatre. At last, leaders have taken that phrase to be something more than an ideal to be mouthed at the would-be artistic and art patrons; they are trying a cure for the "fabulous invalid." If Robert Sherwood were asked what his reason was for being a member, besides the practical economic reasons, he might well say that he loved it because it is stimulating, exciting, and is fun. No matter how in earnest he may be when he writes, he never loses sight of the fun of the theatre.

It would be impossible for anyone with Sherwood's training to take life hard or to take himself too seriously. He is not at all the damning critic that Rice sometimes is in his plays; he prefers to use gentle satire. Even in his Harvard days, satire brought him his first success. While in college he edited a "Vanity Fair" number of the *Lampoon,* and it was so clever that the editor of *Vanity Fair* offered him the position of movie critic on the magazine. He took the offer after his graduation from Harvard in 1918, and there he was in the department with Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley. It is not far-fetched to say that their writing probably had a good deal of influence on Sherwood's later style. He was young when he worked with them, and they are both very distinctive humorists. If he did absorb some of their style, he took the middle road (as usual); his satire has less acid bite than that of Dorothy Parker, and he is more serious than the comic satirist, Benchley. Robert Sherwood reviewed the movies, and the other two reviewed the drama. They enjoyed themselves tremendously, and took their writing quite seriously. And when Mrs. Parker was asked to leave because she infuriated a producer with one of her reviews, both the men left with her. They say that they left because of the principle of free speech, but one can not help wondering if they

did not dread the dullness after she left. From here, Sherwood became the reviewer on *Life* and in 1927-'28, the editor.

These episodes may explain the background or the expression of Sherwood's humor, but his serious, philosophical side does not seem to fit in with the company of Dorothy Parker and a humor magazine. There is little doubt that a man as sensitive to human emotions as Robert Sherwood is, must have been deeply embittered by the War. Between his years as a student at Harvard and his career on *Vanity Fair,* Sherwood joined the Black Watch in Canada and went over seas with them. He was wounded at the battle of Amiens and honorably discharged from the army in 1919. The war did not make him bitter toward life in general, but he hated the waste of human life, and he became bitter toward the practice of war. All that he felt about the war was in *Idiot's Delight,* which won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1936. Harry Van, the principal character said all that he had felt; Harry Van had Sherwood's philosophy. In his long postscript to the play, Sherwood explains that those who say that war is inevitable are false prophets because the decent people who make up the world do not want war; they fight because they "have been deluded by their exploiters, who are members of the indecent minority." Harry Van expresses this idea — Harry, the hoofer, who has made a business of sticking "suckers," and what did he find? "Above everything else I've found Faith. Faith in peace on earth and good will to men—and faith that 'Mumma Mumma,' the three-legged girl really has got three legs. It has made me sure that no matter how much the meek may be bulldozed or gypped they *will* eventually inherit the earth." This pacifistic play is one of the most exciting put on in many years on Broadway, and it has a sub-plot of high comedy.

The seven characters who became this play were first conceived in 1932, and scribbled down in notes. In 1933, on the boat, coming back from London, Sherwood met a Californian who gave him the idea of using Manchuria and a Soviet attack as the setting. Then Sherwood found that he could not make Japanese soldiers sound convincing; so he discarded the whole idea. The play's skeleton became seven characters in search of a setting again. There were Harry; Dr. Waldersee, a scientist: "I'm a servant of the whole damned stupid race—"; Weber, the munitions manufacturer who tries to justify himself: ". . . who are the great criminals—those who sell the instruments of death, or those who buy them and use them? Dog in the manger defense of what they've got and greed for the other fellow's possession . . . for such little people the deadliest weapons are the most merciful"; Mr. and Mrs. Cherry, the English honeymooners; Quillery, the Soviet believer in the brotherhood of man; and Irene, Weber's mistress who pities God: "Poor, lonely old soul. Sitting up in Heaven with nothing to do, but play solitaire. Poor, dear, God. Playing Idiot's Delight. The game that never means anything, and never ends." Then there was poor Dumptsey who never understood what happened to him in the course of governmental events: "Even my poor father—he's dead—but all the writing on the grave stones was in German, so they rubbed it out and translated it, and now he's Italian, too." At last, Sherwood found the right setting, the Italian Alps, and so his world was created. He saw a troupe of American chorus girls in Budapest, and then Harry's girls were born. *Idiot's Delight* became the prize play of the year, but it started out as a Christmas present to the Lunts. The Lunts made the play as the Lunts always make a play. As a team, their time is faultless; as individuals they are fine actors with limitless characterizations. Irene was glamorous, tantalizing, and serious, and Harry *was* a small-time hoofer, breezy, cocksure, and with a homely philosophy which rang true. The Lunts give any play zest; but with an excellent playwright, they give audiences exciting entertainment.

Robert Sherwood met the Lunts when he was preparing for his production, *Barnum Was Right*, given by the Hasty Pudding Club of Harvard. He says that he was invited to have tea with them because he was a friend of Mrs. Parker's and that the invitation implied he was to bring her. The Lunts were getting themselves engaged at the time, and Sherwood regarded them no more seriously than as "gifted grotesques, sure to shine in the sideshow. but doomed never to achieve prominence in the "Main Tent." Sherwood and the Lunts became friends in spite of this first mutual deprecation, and he wrote his second big success for them. Now he considers "to have a play produced by the Lunts is the highest possible privilege . . . the best possible training in the art and craft of the theatre . . . and more than that, as I have tried to suggest, it is a lot of fun." Sherwood leaves the acting of his plays to the actors, and so his characters grow

with playing. When he dedicated *Idiot's Delight* to the Lunts, he showed his usual good taste and discrimination.

About six years after he met the Lunts, in 1926, Sherwood's first success, *The Road to Rome,* was produced. In the real sense of the word, this was his first play, and it was a hit. If he practiced on other efforts, the public does not know it. The only earlier plays he has confessed to are the Hasty Pudding production, and *Tom Ruggles' Surprise* which he wrote when he was ten, but that never reached production. *The Road to Rome* is light satire with a partially historical background; Sherwood's interpretation of Hannibal's retreat at the very gates of Rome is that he left for the sake of Amytis, a Roman matron. Jane Cowl read the play, and Amytis captured her rapturous imagination. Most fortunately for Sherwood, he produced the play with her in the leading role. The critics raved the next morning, and Burns Mantle put it into his volume of best plays of the season. After this production, Robert Sherwood disappointed New York with *Love Nest,* the dramatization of a Ring Lardner story; it was a complete failure. *The Queen's Husband,* a good-natured satire on Queen Marie's visit to the United States, faired better, but most of the reviewers still felt that Sherwood could write a great play if he tried. But before he redeemed himself, he wrote an historical novel after the pattern of *The Road to Rome.*

Sherwood did not realize the difficulties of a novelist as contrasted with those of a dramatist. The novelist and dramatist face very different problems in dealing with historical background; the dramatist can leave details to the imagination of the audience, but the novelist must not leave any questions in the mind of the readers; the dramatist can distort history in drawing his characters because they appear as living people before the audience and the distortion can be made logical, but the novelist must record true personalities because the readers see the characters only as they are described; and the novelist must be accurate in action because the readers see it, but the dramatist may only mention action as having taken place. Robert Sherwood lost sight of these facts when he wrote *The Virtuous Knight.* The novel is about a young knight in the Third Crusade who becomes a skeptic after he travels in Syria and experiences the Eastern religions. A novelist must feel the atmosphere of his setting, though the dramatist may modernize his setting as Sherwood did in *The Road to Rome.* Very apparently Robert Sherwood found the period of the Crusades foreign to him and the Christianity of the time no more stirring than a superstition. The novel seems false through the author's own disbelief.

The novel was followed by a trivial play *This Is New York,* produced in 1930. The crime plot got in the way of the satire on morals in the last half, but the humor of the piece saved it from failure. In 1932, Sherwood produced his second hit. It is a bright comedy about a degenerated Hapsburg prince, his mistress, and her husband. It is gay and witty, bubbling, and theatrically good. This is just what Sherwood hoped *Reunion in Vienna* would be; an anesthesia for unhappy depression audiences. In his preface, he calls it "another demonstration of the escape mechanism in operation." He was gloomy about the world situation which seemed to be filled with "stench and uncertainty," with nothing to look toward but "black doubt," and nothing to look back on but the "wreckage of burned bridges." Men tried the "isms" of government, and cherished individualism which Sherwood fostered and called "the anarchistic impulse, rigorously inhibited, but still alive—the impulse to be drunk and disorderly, to smash laws and ikons, to draw a mustache and beard on the Mona Lisa, to be a hurler of bombs and monkey wrenches—the impulse to be an artist and a damned fool, it provided relief from apprehension, from which, with the help of God and a few Lunts, I have been attempting in this play to escape." But the play was more than a frothy escape; it is a good comedy for production at any period, critical or gay. Sherwood is a firm believer in theatre for entertainment's sake, and he writes toward that end, for he can "see no reason why anyone should go to the theatre as an intellectual duty and for the good of one's soul.

The Petrified Forest was for entertainment, too, but not the same brittle comedy. This story of idealistic dreamers on the Arizona desert has excitement and pathos. Alan, the weak dreamer, is in love with Gabby, who dreams of April in Paris and reads Francois Villon while she serves hamburgers. The final scene in which Alan dies so that Gabby may have a taste of life, ranks with the final scene in *Idiot's Delight* in fitness and constrained emotion. In Sherwood's plays the boy does not get the girl to live with him happily ever after, but they always have

poignant moments together before they part; and if they are parted by death, death is kind and swift. None of his characters live to suffer; they live fully, and for the most part, gaily.

It is natural that Robert Sherwood should pick out a gay French comedy with a serious sub-plot to translate for American audiences. *Tovarich,* by Jaques Deval. This play was definitely in the hit class in Paris, playing eight hundred performances. During its run, Adolf Hitler was urged by his friends to see it; so he called the German Embassy in Paris to find whether Deval was strictly Aryan. He was, and the Fuerher saw Tovarich four times. When Robert Sherwood saw it, it pleased him, and it "induced him to make his one and only adaptation." It is true to the original French and charming to see. The refugee Russian nobles are gay, but their lives inevitably become tangled in a serious problem with the Soviet Union. This seriousness underlying gaiety and mockery might have been written by Sherwood himself, rather than merely translated by him.

Robert Sherwood has a light touch and a serious philosophy. He breaks his reticence on his personal feelings only in the essay-like prefaces to his plays. It is his firm belief that a playwright is interesting to the public only as his plays are important to the public; therefore, we have no personal anecdotes of his life, only a few facts. Born in New Rochelle, New York, he left there at the age of five because his parents "who had the upper hand at the time thought he should be moved." At forty, Robert Sherwood is as shy as he was as a young man. Although he dislikes to be conspicuous, he always attracts attention because of his unusual height —no man six feet seven could avoid attention. He married Mary Brandon, Booth Tarkington's niece, in October, 1922. They had one daughter, Mary. In 1934, the Sherwoods were divorced; and in June, 1935, Robert Sherwood married Miss Madelaine Hurlock, former wife of Marc Connelly, the playwright. The New York *Times* of June 16, 1934, announced his divorce and on the same page announced the marriage of his friend Mrs. Dorothy Parker to Alan Campbell, actor.

Sherwood has had little to say about his early work as a reviewer; the theatre is his life. He expresses his feeling on the subject in his preface to *The Queen's Husband:* "The theatre is no place for conspicuously superior persons. It is a place for those incurable sophomores who have not been blessed by God with the power to rise above their emotions. To be able to write a play for performance, a man must be sensitive, imaginative, gullible; he must be something of a poet and something of a damn fool."

There is nothing of the fool, and much of the poet in Sherwood's most recent success, *Abe Lincoln of Illinois.* His chief interest in Lincoln is the spiritual growth of a great man. It is an emotional literary work, dignified, and stirring. The twelve scenes are well put together, and Sherwood has used skillful discrimination in weaving in Lincoln's own words. The most electric moments are those in which Lincoln's simple eloquence has been incorporated. Robert Sherwood believes in democracy as idealistic and workable—"by refusing to imitate the Fascists in their policies of heavenly fortified isolation, their hysterical self-worship, and psychopathic hatred of others, we may achieve the enjoyment of peaceful life on earth, rather than degraded death in the cellar." His Lincoln is a symbol of democracy to strengthen our shaking faith. So, again, Robert Emmett Sherwood does not sentimentalize, but thrills; does not preach, but subtly suggests. If the standard he set with this first play presented by the Playwrights' Producing Company is kept on the same level by the other partners, the "fabulous invalid" will recuperate.

CORADDI

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Comment

Since 1900, and before, we of the South have been lapsing into a slothfulness that permits an exploitation of our people which is known as the "New South." Defeated in war, we have remained defeatists, and by some chance not usually occurring in the histories of beaten peoples, we are trying to annihilate our own order of things and take on that of the conqueror.

Perhaps the "New South" movement began with the incoming of the carpetbaggers, to whom *The New South,* present journal of the reformers, likens the labor organizers of the present in this passage: "We wonder how long it will be before educated Southerners realize that the carpetbaggers of the 1860's, like the Northern labor organizers who come South today, were not, as painted, ghouls stripping the 'dead body of the South.' They were the bearers of progress, of organization, of social reform." Within the interpretation put upon progress, organization, and social reform by the missionaries of the "New South," the assertion is quite true. We do not believe that any educated person of any section can accept such an interpretation.

"Progress" is industrialization and eternal pioneering to that indefinite future when man's scientific knowledge will be complete. In a capitalist society, industrialism is exploitation of men and materials; in a planned, or Communist society, it is materialism, or the practice of the doctrine that man has no immaterial (spiritual) quality in his nature. "Organization," in part, is the subordination of the individual to the mass. The mass, in turn, is subordinate to a leader, or representative, who may or may not be the spokesman of the people, according to his own integrity. "Social reform,"

in its theory (equality of opportunity, for example) is commendable, but in practice gives everybody an equal opportunity for a bad education.

The growth of this missionary group has been encouraged by the active help of hyperkinetic young Southerners who go into the "field", and by the passive aid of intelligent young Southerners who go North. Southern politicians have lent their support. It is common knowledge now that the South's politicians are selling her out to the North and industry. It makes them feel important to lend Mr. Industrialist a hand toward starting a paper mill down in Georgia where Mr. Industrialist is going to usher in prosperity by paying four dollars per cord for good pine timber, cut and hauled to the mill. "Industry Marches South!" says *Business Week,* and tells us why: cheap and unassertive labor, unexploited natural resources, low tax rates. Louisiana has a new constitutional amendment allowing ten years of tax exemption on all industrial construction. Meanwhile the farmers pay. Mississippi has passed a law empowering communities to bond themselves to buy land, erect buildings, and buy equipment for new industries. Naturally, industries leave the North and come South to take advantage of these enticements. As a result, the small business man and the chain stores get the weekly twelve dollar pay checks, the North gets the profits, and the laborers and farmers get long-drawn starvation.

In order to offset the injustices done laborers and farmers, the missionaries of the "New South", both Northern and Southern, organize militant labor groups and demand more industries to make more twelve dollar pay checks and carry more profits North, leaving more impoverished laborers and farmers. It is interesting that *Business Week,* which is conservative and has nothing to do with the "New South" dogma, rationalizes twelve-dollar pay checks by saying that the cost of living is lower in the South. That is not true for the salaried worker. Moreover, the cost of living increases with the spread of industrialism because prices go up in the false boom of many little pay checks, and, more important, because industrialism places the middleman between the laborer and the farmer, or the source of his food.

The advocates of the "New South" are not in favor of low wages, but they are in favor of industrialization with "fundamental changes of the economic system", in the words of *The New South.* They favor the complete industrial state, that is, the Communist, or planned society. They also favor Democracy and equality, and herein, we believe, is their fundamental contradiction of themselves. The Communist government, or rule by planning, precludes Democracy and equality. It either grows out of, or begins, servility. The individual is lost in the "masses", for whom the planning is done. In Russia, housing conditions are bad, but nothing can be done about this individual discomfort until the building projects of the community are completed. Those who make the plans are dictators, and there is no tolerance for individual dissent because the success of such a government depends on unanimity of voiced opinion.

There is no doubt that something must be done. The South has neither money nor credit with which to develop her resources. At present, Northern development of these resources is exploitation of them and further impoverishment of the region.

THE winners of the prizes for best article and best poem for the year 1938-39 will be announced in the May issue of *Coraddi*. Material submitted for that issue will be included in the contest.

REVIEWS

the personal poet

NOBODY battles over Cummings any more. During the latter half of the last decade, E. E. Cummings caused quite a stir in the poets' corner of the literary world. He intended to: he departed from the orthodox quite ostentatiously and made a splash. But some of the other poets found that he wasn't so unorthodox after all, and the others got used to him; so E. E. Cummings took his niche among the "recognized" modern poets and the poets' corner settled back into semi-darkness until the next "publicity-minded" poet should come along.

In the beginning Mr. Cummings attracted attention because he was unorthodox. He was unorthodox in that he did not put his words on the page as the other poets did. Take this:

Portrait

Buffalo Bill's
defunct
        who used to
        ride a watersmoth-silver
                                        stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjust-
    like that
                                                        Jesus
he was a handsome man
                        and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death

But Victor Hugo had done this in *Les Djinns,* and also his brilliant contemporary, Charles Nodier. Georg Brandes wrote of Nodier: "At his command letters become so long they stretch from top to bottom of the page; he commands again and they dwindle into the tiniest of the tiny; he screams and they stand up on end in terror . . . sometimes they follow the narrative so closely that a descent of the stair is printed thus:

Hereupon
    our
        hero
            went
                dejectedly
                    down
                        the
                            stairs."

And what was Mr. Cummings' objective— why did he put his words where he wanted them? Why did he use marks of punctuation so indiscriminately (shades of Tristram Shandy)? Why did he write in lower case letters, even down to the pronoun *i?*

In short, why did he resort to typographical mechanisms? Was he attempting to substitute this device for style? And what is style? One critic defines it as "that indestructible quality of a piece of writing which may be distinguished from it's communicable content, but which in no sense can be subtracted from it." Now then, let us take any of Cummings' poems and write it in the conventional form or distort it more than ever — is the communicable content changed? For example we may rearrange this poem:

listen
beloved
i dreamed
        it appeared that you thought to
        escape me and became a great
        lily atilt on
        insolent waters but i was aware of
        fragrance. . . .

to read:

Listen, beloved, I dreamed
It appeared that you thought to
Escape me and became a great
Lily atilt on insolent waters;
But I was aware of fragrance. . . .

or:

listen
be-
loved i
dreamed
it appeared
that you thought to escape me
and became a
great lily
atilt
on
insolent
waters
but i was
aware
of a
fragrance. . .

In the first rewriting the beloved and the dream are no longer distinctly separated. The experience is not actual; it has become a poem. In the second rewriting the experience is still an unreality. The dream becomes so impressionistic that it may still be a dream. But the original poem is actual; it is personal—the speaker addressed his beloved, then he tells her of his dream. He repeats it as one repeats a dream, with no attention to details, but rushing—to remember each part.

On the other hand, some of the critics see Mr. Cummings' typographical device as a false force, foreign to the poem, which gives the imagery the *look* of movement only. But, to me, the typography and content are integral.

Take this poem from IS 5 for example:

it's jolly
odd what pops into
your jolly tete when the
jolly shells begin dropping jolly fast you
hear the rrump and
then nearerandnearerandNEARER
and before
you can
!
& we're
Not
(oh—
—i say
that's jolly odd
old, thing, jolly
odd, jolly
jolly odd isn't
it jolly odd

The first four lines work up to the sending of the cannon ball. The lengthening of the lines create, in conjunction with the content, a piling up effect. Then a short line—as breathless as actuality when you "hear the rrump" and the line becomes longer and the tempo faster as the whirring comes "nearerandnearerandNEARER

and before
you can
! "

There are no thoughts, the mind *is* blank. Mr. Cummings dwindles into unintelligibility because the person affected has.

"& we're
Not"

After speech begins, the realization that he is not dead comes. It comes in capital letters to the mind. There is no other way to communicate the content.

In the last stanza he nervously repeats a catch phrase—all he remembers of his former thought. Draining his fright in words.

Cummings, according to R. P. Blackmur, belongs to the group whose dogma is a denial of the intelligence and who deliberately asserts that the unintelligible is the only object of significant experience.

Whether you and I subscribe to this dogma makes little difference, because in spite of it Cummings produces a great deal of good poetry. The average reader, unstudied in the art of criticism, likes a poem when it touches, or seems to touch, his "formed body of experience"—the means it employs to do this are incidental. Nor does Cummings succeed in reaching our formed body of experience. He says, himself, in the introduction to his collected poems:

"The poems to come are for you and for me and are not for most people

—it's no use trying to pretend that most people and ourselves are alike. Mostpeople have less in common with ourselves than the squarerootofminusone. You and I are human beings; most people are snobs."

So Cummings is writing for the chosen few who can grasp his essays at a new doctrine. He is not going to express violent emotions, use words because they include all possible meanings. Too long have the poets mollified us by putting our unspeakable moments into words. Cummings is not intent on giving poetic expression to our emotions. He is intent on writing emo-

tions. In his own words: "nothing proving or sick or partial. Nothing false, nothing difficult or easy or small or colossal. Nothing ordinary or extraordinary, nothing emptied or filled, real or unreal; nothing feeble and known or clumsy and guessed. Everywhere tints childrening, innocent, spontaneous, true." He writes his own emotions into his poetry. He writes *himself*. He is, avowedly, a personal poet.

How? Because he centers interest on himself and he uses extremely personal words—words which we feel belong to him, but are lent to us momentarily. The interest is centered on himself, because when we reach the end of a poem we turn to the poet from whom the poem emanated. However, to grasp his felt emotion we must draw from our own experience. He is a personal poet—for all of us.

Returning to his words: the critics say he uses the same one too many times; he uses too many abstract words; he uses conglomerations of words to emulate spontaneity. All of this is true. And it is a phase of Cummings' style. There exists the fault of being too concrete. When Cummings resorts to abstractions he has a purpose; he is writing what he feels, giving the reader a chance to conjure up his own images rather than supplying them in concrete detail. All poetry does not have to be exteriorly communicative.

Besides, Cummings gets in his quota of concreteness. His conceits are as artificial as John Donnes's—and as effective. A few chance examples:

> "the hours rise up putting off stars and it is dawn
> into the street of the sky light walks scattering poems on earth"

> "now Twilight seeks the thrill of moon"

> "My love
> thy head is a casket
> of the cool jewel of thy mind"

Summarily then: Cummings is a personal poet—because he uses typographical mechanisms to communicate content *as he conceived it;* he uses words which belong to him to convey emotions which belong to him which we comprehend through our own experience. He is personal because we must see through his personality first. If he is excessively sententious, so are we, at times.

Nor is all of his work good. That is the tragedy of a collected volume of poems—our estimations must be rubberized. Some of his poetry, especially the later poems, is unintelligible. Most of his better poems are contained in *Tulips and Chimneys, XLI Poems,* and *IS 5.* In *W, No Thanks* and *New Poems* we may say that, as a whole, his personal approach is so personal that our experience does not encompass it.

—Bettie Harward

Wallace Stevens

Wallace Stevens is not an ultra-modern intellectual poet, nor is he an old-fashioned aesthete. He is a whimsical philosopher, but not a great thinker, because he permits his sensual perceptions and his mental perceptions to become confused. Perhaps he is not conscious of a confusion, though; for we feel, at times, that he is trying to consummate his perceptions. In the conclusion to "Academic Discourse at Havana":

> . . . It may, however, be
> An incantation that the moon defines
> By mere example opulently clear.
> And the old casino likewise may define
> An infinite incantation of our selves
> In the grand decadence of the perished swans.

Then again, he admits and explains his perceptual confusion:

> And although my mind perceives the force behind the moment,
> The mind is smaller than the eye.

Not that his poetry is lessened in power by this handicap: instead it gives us a poet who is acutely conscious of the world around him, who delights in it.

In his volume, *Ideas of Order,* Mr. Stevens is seeking the solution, or the key, to the chaotic world he sees around him. A world coldly thirsty for power, attaining and losing that power time and again with no lessons learned. But he cannot fathom the full solution; he can only see portions of a showy outline:

It was when the trees were leafless first in November
And their blackness became apparent, that one first
Knew the eccentric to be the base of design.

He says further:

He is singing and chanting the things that are part of him,
The worlds that are and will be, death and day.
Nothing is final he chants. No man shall see the end.

And Stevens is glad that this is so, for—

If ever the search for a tranquil belief should end,
The future might stop emerging out of the past. . . .

Though his ideas of order are, alas, but ideas, Wallace Stevens does not lose his joy in beauty; he fears for what beauty and the world might come to. To a degree, he is old-fashioned, but no more than the rest of us—he has fears—

. . . The epic of disbelief
Blares oftener and soon, will soon be constant.
Some harmonious skeptic soon in a skeptical music.

He has aversions—there are phases of the modern world which grate against his sense of values—which he would as soon see gone. These verses are from "Mozart, 1935":

If they throw stones upon the roof
While you practice arpeggios,
It is because they carry down the stairs
A body in rags.
Be seated at the piano.

Be thou the voice,
Not you. Be thou, be thou
The voice of angry fear,
The voice of this beseiging pain.

Be thou that wintry sound
As of the great wind howling,
By which sorrow is released,
Dismissed, absolved
In a starry placating.

We may return to Mozart.
He was young, and we, we are old.
The snow is falling
And the streets are full of cries.
Be seated, thou.

Stevens scatters his delightful half-maxims of philosophy, rich and simple, yet never too obvious, throughout his exquisite imagery. He puts them together in every acceptable verse form, equally competent in any he chooses. His rhythm may flow majestically or be broken up with equal ease accordingly as it fits the subject matter and mood of its content. Stevens writes few long poems; he is frugal with his language, carefully choosing words which will enrich each line with details. His poems have the sound of direct discourse, but are much fuller and richer.

Stevens is fond of queer words. Queer words entail his imagination, which, he has said is "the magnificent cause of being . . .the one reality in this imagined world." One finds words like "mickey mockers", "apt weed" (for a hat), and "Shreaking and skrittering." Stevens' poetry is rich in fine phrases too—his skillful word combinations are reminiscent of Shakespeare—like "musky muscadines," "corridors of cloudy thought," "empurpled garden grass," "the pale coherence of moon and mood," "the immense solitude of wind."

No idea of order, but indicative of Wallace Stevens' insight of beauty in queer places and ability to portray it, is his poetry of the machination of poetry:

Is the function of the poet here mere sound,
Subtler than the ornatest prophecy,
To stuff the ear?

Pitiless verse? A few words tuned
And tuned and tuned and tuned.

And this fragment, so nearly akin to Shakespeare:

Poetry is a finikin thing of air
That lives uncertainly and not for long
Yet radiantly beyond much lustier blurs.

And Wallace Stevens' poetry will certainly "live beyond much lustier blurs." A powerful, consistent personality such as his cannot be dimmed by time, a changing audience, or even death, for

"Death is the mother of beauty."

—Bettie Harward

Chesterfield

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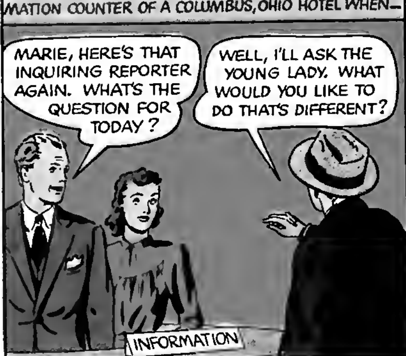

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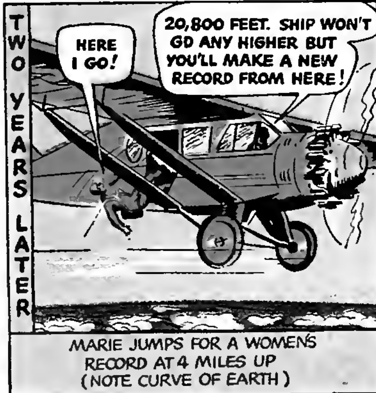

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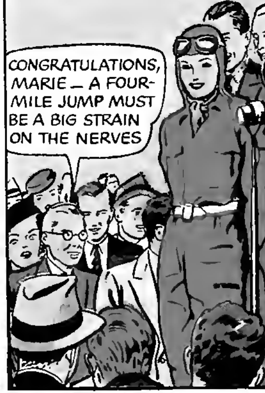

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